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A  
HISTORY OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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# A History of The British Army

BY

THE HON. J. W. FORTESCUE

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*Quae caret ora cruore nostro*

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## PREFATORY NOTE

I WISH to record my thanks to the Lords of the Admiralty for permission to use an unpublished MS. Chart of the Scheldt in the preparation of the map for the campaign of Walcheren ; to the Duke of Wellington for great kindness in giving me access to the Wellington MSS. at Apsley House ; to Professor Oman for much valuable help over and above that which I have constantly derived from his *History of the Peninsular War* ; and to Mr. H. W. Cribb for his continued good work in the production of maps.

J. W. F.



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## CHAPTER XXIV

So far our survey of the Spanish insurrection has been confined to its effects in Europe only. It is now time to glance at its influence in another sphere, which for some time past has been left unconsidered, namely, the West Indies. Little has been said of affairs in that quarter since 1805 ; and yet, trifling though they may now seem to be, they were never without importance a century ago, owing, first, to the enormous value of the West Indian trade, and, secondly, to the deadly nature of the West Indian climate. Possessions which, even in time of the profoundest peace, devoured at least two thousand European soldiers every year, to say nothing of seamen and marines, could not but exert a constant pressure upon British military policy. The designs of Pitt to reduce France to submission by the ruin of her colonial trade had, it is true, been abandoned as preposterous ; and the bitter experience of 1795 and 1796 had produced a reform, which was little less than a revolution, in the conduct of West Indian wars and the maintenance of West Indian garrisons. By insensible degrees the guardianship of the British islands had tended to fall more and more into the hands of black troops and of foreign mercenaries. The Sixtieth Regiment, having begun life as Royal Americans, had become practically Royal West Indians ; and its battalions had been increased by the infusion of alien prisoners and deserters of every kind, with a recklessness which, as we have already seen in the account of Moore's expedition, had produced most dangerous consequences. Now that



the War Office was governed by Castlereagh, the one Minister who had the confidence and courage to favour the employment of British troops acting together in large numbers in Europe, the problem of the West Indian garrisons called more loudly than ever for solution.

This problem, moreover, was one which touched military policy at other points than that of mere recruiting. The rivals of England in the West Indies were four : to windward the French with their allies the Dutch, and after 1807 the Danes ; to leeward the French in St. Domingo, and elsewhere the Spaniards only. The latter being supine, disaffected towards the mother-country, and unlikely to receive aid from her, could be counted upon to abstain from offensive movements, and were not therefore very formidable. France and her allies also had been rendered more or less impotent for the infliction of serious injury, by the capture of the Danish colonies and the destruction of the French fleet. But the maintenance of an effective blockade upon the French coast was an impossibility ; and, with a man of such restless activity as Napoleon at the head of the French Government, there could be no security in the Antilles so long as Martinique and Guadeloupe lay ready to his hand as bases of operations. Again, even though the regular forces of France and Spain might remain quiescent, their West Indian possessions furnished nests for a host of privateers, which preyed unceasingly upon British commerce, and necessitated the employment of a vast number of British cruisers in West Indian waters. This in turn taxed heavily the resources of the British fleet and, owing to the unhealthiness of the station, made frightful drains upon the supply of British seamen. Hence arose the question whether it might not be more profitable by a supreme effort to extinguish French power in the West Indies altogether. To deal in the like peremptory fashion with the Spaniards was out of the question ; but the expulsion of the French would enormously increase, if it did not absolutely ensure, security to windward ; while, even to leeward,

it would sensibly lighten the burdens of Jamaica if all danger from St. Domingo were banished. The captured islands would of course require garrisons ; but, on the other hand, the force in the British islands could be so much reduced as to meet this call without material difficulty, while the strain upon the Navy would be greatly relieved. The peril of an insurrection of negroes would, however, still remain ; and it was not likely that Napoleon's agents would permit this menace to be removed, more especially if exceptional mortality among the European troops should offer a favourable opportunity for a rising. The question was one over which Ministers might reasonably hesitate for long ; but such a change in the situation as the conversion of the Spaniards from enemies into allies, would suffice to turn the scale in favour of the more decisive policy. A brief account must therefore be given of the sudden transition whereby the Caribbean seas, being converted into an English lake, ceased until the close of the war to be a scene of active operations.

To deal first with the leeward sphere, it may be said that, after the departure of Villeneuve's fleet with Nelson in pursuit, Jamaica had been little troubled except by disease. But the mortality among the troops had been very formidable, though due in great measure to bad barracks and other preventible causes. The Assembly of Jamaica was still violently at feud with the British Government over the formation of West India regiments, and, being now threatened with the abolition of the slave-trade, took its revenge by refusing to provide decent quarters for the British regiments. These captious legislators were, unfortunately, strengthened in their prejudices by a mutiny of some recruits of the Second West India regiment, who murdered two of their officers before they were disarmed. Though the remaining men of the battalion continued loyal, the crime was drastically dealt with, sixteen out of the twenty-eight culprits being con-

1808.  
May.

.808. demned to death, and seven actually executed. The planters, however, were not conciliated by this severity ; and the General in command complained that their hostility made it very difficult to take care of the health of his soldiers. Bad housing and salt food heightened the men's craving for drink, and excessive indulgence in rum reduced the troops practically to uselessness. The Eighteenth Royal Irish, for instance, were hopelessly broken down by a march of thirteen miles along an easy road ; and the General in command reported that, in case of active service in the West Indies, three-quarters of the rank and file would succumb at once. The Assembly, however, recked little of such matters in its insane prejudice against black soldiers. The members carried their animosity so far that they demanded the minutes of the court-martial on the negro mutineers, and, when the General declined to supply them, summoned him to their bar to answer for breach of privilege. Fortunately the Governor upheld the General in his refusal to take notice of this impertinence.

Thanks, therefore, to the stubbornness of the Jamaican magnates, the death-rate among the British troops was terribly high ; though the military authorities, by moving part of the garrison to the deserted Maroon towns in the mountains, succeeded in saving some hundreds of lives. Fortunately there was no danger from a foreign enemy to be dreaded, and the British Government was too wise to undertake any aggressive operations against the Spanish possessions.<sup>1</sup>

One place only, the port of Baracoa, at the north-east corner of Cuba, had been pointed out as desirable of capture since it was a hotbed of privateers ; but the Governor of Jamaica had forbore to waste men even over this trifling object. Love of prize-money, however, induced a British naval officer to step in where the commanders of the army had feared to tread. In

<sup>1</sup> General Carmichael to Sec. of State, 15th Oct., 19th Nov., 20th Dec. 1808.

the summer of 1807 Captain Tait of the King's store-ship *Chichester* received orders to convey the Ninety-ninth Foot from the Bahamas to Bermuda. Since the regiment was scattered among various islands of the group, it could not for some days be assembled for embarkation; and Tait therefore took the opportunity to ship four officers and eighty-seven convalescent men from the hospital at New Providence, ostensibly with the object of restoring their health by a cruise. This done, he asked permission of the Governor at Nassau to attack Baracoa, and, being refused, joined company with a privateer and sailed straight to the prohibited port. Arrived there, he set his convalescents on land, together with a few marines, directed the officers to capture a battery which prevented the ships from closing in with the shore, and stood out again to sea. The unhappy detachment strove to obey his orders, but, being met by a heavy fire from nine guns and from ten times its number of infantry, was driven back to the beach, where, as Tait had withdrawn all his boats, it was compelled to surrender. After a month's confinement the unlucky men were exchanged; but two officers and eleven men had been killed and more than twice as many wounded, simply to gratify the cupidity of Captain Tait. The incident was so trifling that it would be unworthy of mention, except to show how evil was the influence upon the naval service of Popham's raid upon Rio de la Plata.<sup>1</sup>

A year later Napoleon's invasion of Spain and the Spanish insurrection altered the whole course of British policy to leeward. The Governor of Jamaica was directed, instead of molesting the Spanish colonies, to spare no efforts to save them from falling into the hands of France. So anxious was the British Government for the security of Cuba, that in August 1808 six hundred<sup>2</sup> British soldiers were actually embarked to

<sup>1</sup> General Coote to Sec. of State, 11th, 13th Sept. 1807; 13th Jan. 1808.

<sup>2</sup> Flank cos. 1/18th, 54th, 55th, 1/60th, 6/60th, 2nd W.I.R.

1809. reinforce the Spanish garrison, though, as they were not needed, they never sailed for the island. But there was none the less work for this force, for at the end of 1808 the Spaniards besieged the French in the town of St. Domingo; and early in 1809 General Carmichael offered to bring a British detachment to their assistance.

The Spaniards, whose operations were not prospering,

June 7. welcomed the proposal, and on the 7th of June Carmichael sailed with nine hundred men, followed three days later by a second division of over five hundred

June 28. more.<sup>1</sup> On the 28th he disembarked his force at Palanque, the nearest landing-place to St. Domingo, and

June 30. thirty miles distant from the city. On the 30th, going on in advance of his own troops, he met the Spanish General Sanchez Ramirez, who, being unfit for duty from disease and excessive fatigue, placed his forces under Carmichael's command. Carmichael at once ordered a forward movement, hoping that the British would arrive before St. Domingo on that night, when he intended to carry the place by assault. Heavy rain and the fatigue of dragging guns over bad roads, however, delayed the arrival of the detachment for twenty-four hours; though no sooner did it appear than the French commandant proposed a conference to treat for the evacuation of the city. Carmichael insisted upon absolute surrender; and after some demur his terms were accepted. The garrison having defended itself bravely for eight months, was allowed to march out with the honours of war, and was then shipped off to

Aug. 29. France to be regularly exchanged. By the 29th of August the last of Carmichael's men had returned to Jamaica; and therewith active operations to leeward came to a close, not only for the year 1809, but for the rest of the war. It is somewhat singular that they should have ended at the very place which Cromwell

<sup>1</sup> 1st division: R.A. 100, 1/18th, 100; 54th, 200; 55th, 100; 2nd W.I.R. 300=800 rank and file.

2nd division: 6/60th, 200; 2nd W.I.R. 100; 7th W.I.R. 200=500 rank and file.

had selected over one hundred and sixty years before 1806. as the object of the first organised colonial expedition of the British army.<sup>1</sup>

To windward, alarms were more frequent owing to the proximity of Martinique and Guadeloupe. Both islands were supposed to be blockaded with more or less strictness by the British squadron ; but none the less French ships contrived constantly to throw petty reinforcements into them, evading the vigilance of the British men-of-war both on the coast of France and in the West Indies. The mortality among the British troops, again, was not less great than in Jamaica, and from precisely the same causes. In Barbados, for instance, which required a garrison of from three to four thousand men, the officers were housed in small wooden sheds no better than negroes' huts, while the barracks throughout the islands were commonly situated in swamps. The result was that in 1805 two thousand men of the windward garrisons perished. At the same time the colonial assemblies were quite as hostile as their brethren in Jamaica to West India regiments, and threw every difficulty in the way of their maintenance. Nor was the alarm of the planters wholly groundless, for conspiracies of negroes, hatched by black troops, were discovered within the space of a few months in 1805 and 1806 at Surinam, Trinidad, and Tobago, the insurgents going the length of poisoning the water-tank in the fort at the island last named. 1806, indeed, was a year of troubles, for, apart from mutinies and much sickness, a French squadron under Admiral Guillaumé and Jerome Bonaparte made a raid upon St. Kitts, which caused much alarm, though the attack was successfully foiled by the garrison<sup>2</sup> of the renowned fortress on Brimstone Hill. Lastly, there was a terrific hurricane at Dominica, which tore the barracks to pieces and carried the timbers a mile away. The

<sup>1</sup> Carmichael to Sec. of State, 12th Aug. 1808 ; 23rd Feb., 4th June, 8th July, 8th Sept. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> It consisted of the 11th and 70th Foot and R.A.

1806. casualties in the Forty-sixth and Third West India Regiment, which composed the garrison, amounted to ten killed and over one hundred more or less severely wounded by this storm ; and the officers' mess of the Forty-sixth, which had lost all its plate and linen during the French raid of 1805, for the second time within twelve months was stripped of everything that it possessed. In the course of the hurricane, however, occurred an incident which must not be omitted. When the terror and the devastation were at their height, the sentry who guarded the colours of the Forty-sixth remained unmoved, and refused to quit his post. Though repeatedly warned of his danger, he stood firm until at last he fell, buried, together with his precious charge, under the ruins of an adjoining house. When the hurricane had passed away, he was dug out still alive, and was able to hear before he expired that the colours were safe. He had distinguished himself by his bravery during the French attack of the previous year, and had been severely wounded ; and it cannot be too much regretted that the name of so noble a soldier should have perished.<sup>1</sup>

1807. It was with such troubles that General Bowyer, the Commander-in-Chief to windward, was wrestling, when in October 1807 there came to him the news that Denmark had declared war, together with the Secretary of State's commands to prepare for an attack upon the Danish islands. Bowyer duly obeyed, but pointed out that he could not find garrisons for the captured possessions unless he were reinforced. However, he embarked nearly twenty-five hundred men<sup>2</sup> from the various

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Beckwith to Sec. of State, 21st Sept. 1805 ; 2nd Jan., 2nd Feb. 1806. Gen. Bowyer to Sec. of State, 29th April, 16th May, 25th July, 13th, 31st Oct. 1806.

<sup>2</sup> *From Barbados* : R.A. 144 ; 3/60th, 650 ; detach<sup>t</sup>. 1st W.I.R. 422 ; Milit. Artificers (negro) 53.

*From Dominica* : detach<sup>t</sup>. 46th, 177 ; flank cos. 3rd W.I.R. 218.

*From Antigua* : flank cos. 3rd W.I.R. 218.

*From Grenada* : detach<sup>t</sup>. 15th, 324.

*From St. Kitts* : flank cos. 70th. *Total*, 2451 of all ranks.

British islands, and on receiving definite orders to make his attack, coupled with a promise of a reinforcement of three battalions, he sailed from Barbados, and on the 21st of December assembled his force off St. Thomas. That island, St. John and its dependencies surrendered at once, and Ste. Croix four days later ; and thus three more sugar islands were taken over to enrich the British nation and deplete the British army.<sup>1</sup>

These acquisitions of course greatly weakened the resources and increased the anxieties of the General, the more so since he was instructed to keep only one, or at most two, of the three battalions promised to him under his own command. But his cup was not yet full. The naval officers, who were blockading Guadeloupe, declared that they could not fulfil their duty while *Mariegallante* and *Deseada* remained in French hands to shelter French privateers ; and on the 2nd and 30th of March 1808 they surprised and captured first the one and then the other of those islands. Admiral Cochrane decided to hold *Mariegallante* for its convenience in supplying the blockading squadron with wood, water, and fresh beef, and announced his intention to occupy it with three hundred marines. After a few days, however, he found, as invariably happens, that it would be far more convenient for the Army to furnish the garrison ; and he made application to Bowyer and to Castlereagh accordingly. "I want no Commissaries, Quarter-masters, Barrack-masters, nor any of the long list of army-garrisons," he wrote, "only three hundred soldiers." Bowyer demurred strongly to the Admiral's request, being hard pressed for men, and doubtful as to the advantages of holding *Mariegallante* ; and he declined to do more than supply one hundred and fifty soldiers to serve on board the fleet. He went home in June before the matter had been finally settled, but his successor, General George Beckwith, a brother of the more famous Sidney Beckwith of the Ninety-fifth,

<sup>1</sup> Sec. of State to Bowyer, 7th Sept., 3rd Nov. ; Bowyer to Sec. of State, 14th Oct., 8th Nov., 27th Dec. 1807.



1808. strongly agreed with his opinion. "If the Governor of Guadeloupe does not attack and overwhelm that garrison of marines," he wrote, "he is no soldier."

By the middle of August many of the marines had perished, and Beckwith imparted to the War Office his great anxiety for the safety of the survivors. Even while he was writing, a French force was on its way to Mariegalante from Guadeloupe; and a few days later came a note from the Admiral to say that his garrison was in great danger and to beg for reinforcements. Beckwith at once sent three hundred men of the Third West India Regiment, which rescued the unfortunate marines, and took more than one hundred and seventy of the enemy prisoners; but it was only by the General's promptitude and with the help of an exceptionally favourable wind that this happy result was substituted for the capture of every one of the Admiral's men. Cochrane thereupon increased the garrison of Mariegalante, and called upon Beckwith to furnish six hundred soldiers to eke out the crews of the blockading ships. The General loyally complied, but did not fail to add criticism to compliance. "There is a thing," he wrote to the Secretary of State, "called prize afloat: searching for it on shore tends to a different signification, though both words begin with a P. We cannot keep the seas without six hundred soldiers in the fleet, such has been the mortality. If seamen occupy islands, the Army must be turned into seamen and marines, but I cannot do this for long." For the painful truth must be told, that the naval occupation of Mariegalante was chiefly a question of prize-money. The Admiral treated the island not as a possession of King George, but partly as a man-of-war and partly as private property. A post-captain was placed in command of it, a native force was raised by enlisting two hundred runaway negroes from Guadeloupe; and the produce of the island was shipped by the captors to North America, a commerce which was strictly forbidden to all other British islands. Beckwith avoided the very name of Mariegalante, so

Aug. 29-  
Sept. 3.

far as was possible, dreading friction between Army and Navy, but found it hard to submit to the depletion of his battalions in order that naval officers might make a handsome profit by trade.<sup>1</sup>

The most serious part of the affair was that the blockade of Martinique was relaxed rather than straitened by the Admiral's operations ashore. Early in 1808 the island had been in a state of famine, and an intercepted letter from one of the inhabitants gave a despairing account of its condition. Ministers were inspired by this document with such hopes of Martinique's speedy fall, that they directed three West India Regiments to be concentrated at Barbados and held ready for service, ordering the Admiral at the same time to enforce the blockade with the utmost rigour. These instructions came too late. Corvettes from France, heavily laden with flour, had contrived during the summer to elude Cochrane's cruisers, while salt fish, an essential article of food for negroes, had been smuggled in, according to the usual practice of the British planters, from some of the British islands. After receipt of the new orders as to the blockade, the squadron for a short time evinced great activity, and the price of flour in Martinique was doubled during the month of November ; but in December more ships from France with men, stores, and provisions arrived safely both at Martinique and at Guadeloupe, increasing the garrison of the former island from two to three thousand men, and banishing for the present all anxiety as to supplies. The truth was, as Beckwith reported, that the British fleet was too defective both in numbers and in energy to make the blockade efficient, and could not, without seven or eight hundred troops on board, even pretend a fitness either to close the French ports or to meet an enemy at sea.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bowyer to Sec. of State, 21st March 1808 ; Beckwith to Sec. of State, 11th June, 22nd Aug., 28th Aug., 14th, 15th Sept. 1808, 30th May, 16th July 1809 ; Admiral Sir Alex. Cochrane to Sec. of State, 6th April 1808.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. of State to Beckwith, 20th, 31st Aug. ; Beckwith to Sec. of State, 4th, 18th Oct., 5th Nov. 1808 ; 3rd Jan. 1809.

1808. In the circumstances Cochrane earnestly pressed Beckwith to attack Martinique in force. A battalion of the Thirteenth had arrived at Barbados from Bermuda early in December; and on the 29th of the same month General Prevost and four battalions from Halifax, which had been temporarily lent for purposes of the expedition, also sailed into Carlisle Bay. Beckwith, at first, hesitated to commit himself to so important an enterprise. The enemy had been lately reinforced; the attitude of the United States was most unfriendly to Spain,<sup>1</sup> and the British had undertaken to protect the Spanish colonies against aggression. However, after consulting General Prevost, he yielded, and, having organised ten thousand men into two divisions under that officer and General Jan. 28. Maitland, he sailed with them on the 28th of January 1809 for Martinique.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The officer commanding in Mexico in April 1809 actually requested arms from the Governor of Jamaica for defence of the country against American aggression. Duke of Manchester to Sec. of State, 21st May 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Beckwith to Sec. of State, 3rd, 4th, 28th Jan., 8th March 1809. The force was organised as follows:—  
*First Division.* Prevost. 7071 of all ranks.

*1st Brigade.* Brig. Hoghton.

7th	.	.	.	.	.	981
23rd	.	.	.	.	.	979
1st W.I.R.	.	.	.	.	.	450
R.A. and Artificers	.	.	.	.	.	60

2470

*2nd Brigade.* Brig. Colville.

8th	.	.	.	.	.	998
13th	.	.	.	.	.	833
1st W.I.R.	.	.	.	.	.	347
R.A.	.	.	.	.	.	43

2221

*Reserve.* Brig. Nicholson.

Flank cos. 25th	.	.	.	.	140
3 and 4/60th	.	.	.	.	700
4th W.I.R.	.	.	.	.	850
Light Inf. Batt.	.	.	.	.	550
2 brigades R.A.	.	.	.	.	140

2380

Beckwith's plan of campaign was nearly akin to 1809. that of Grey in 1794, his principal object being first to force an entrance into Fort Royal Bay, for the security of the fleet, and, secondly, to seize the position of Morne Bruneau to north of Fort Royal. Accordingly, on the morning of the 30th Maitland disembarked at St. Luce, Jan. 30. detaching the York Rangers to land at Anse d'Arlet, take the battery at Cap Salomon in rear and seize the heights which commanded Pigeon Island. Meeting with no resistance at St. Luce, Maitland pushed rapidly forward, reached Rivière Salée on the 31st, and after a Jan. 31. day's halt for supplies, marched on to Lamentin on the 2nd of February. His advance was entirely unopposed, Feb. 2. though a numerous militia was afoot; but by the speed of his movements he was able to intercept the main body of these near Lamentin, when they readily submitted and agreed to return to their homes. Another march brought him on the 3rd within gunshot of the Feb. 3. principal fort, the name of which had been changed by Napoleon from Fort Bourbon to Fort Desaix; and there he took up a position to cover the landing-place of Cohé du Lamentin. Meanwhile the York Rangers

*Second Division.* Maitland. 3710 of all ranks.

*3rd Brigade.* Lt.-Col. Barnes (46th).

63rd	.	.	.	600
R. York Rangers	.	.	.	750

1350

*4th Brigade.* Lt.-Col. Riall (15th).

Flank cos. 15th and 46th	.	230
Batt. cos. 15th	.	190
York L.I. Volunteers	.	350
3 cos. 8th W.I.R.	.	350

1120

*5th Brigade.* Lt.-Col. McNair (90th).

90th	.	460
3rd W.I.R.	.	700
1 brigade R.A.	.	80

1240

1809. under Major Henderson had captured the battery at Cap Salomon, and seized the heights above Pigeon Island without molestation. Heavy guns were then landed in an adjacent bay, and, by the time that the blue-jackets of the *Pompée* with great labour had brought them up to the heights, the engineers had constructed a battery ready to receive them. On the 3rd this battery opened
- Feb. 4. fire, and on the morning of the 4th Pigeon Island surrendered, leaving the mouth of Fort Royal Bay clear for the fleet.
- Jan. 30. Meanwhile Prevost's division, accompanied by Beckwith in person and escorted by a detachment of the fleet, had landed unopposed at Bay Robert, the inlet next to southward of the Bay of Galion, on the windward coast. Starting late on the afternoon of the 30th, and making a night march of seven miles southward through most difficult country, the First Brigade arrived
- Jan. 31. at Lezarde River before dawn of the 31st. Continuing the advance with the Seventh and one company of black troops only, Prevost found the enemy everywhere
- Feb. 1. falling back before him, and on the 1st occupied Morne Bruneau. Here he was joined by Hoghton with the remainder of the brigade and the Light Infantry Battalion from the Reserve, when a considerable force of French regular troops with one or two guns was seen strongly posted on the declivity of an adjacent hill, in a good position covered by a river. Though his guns had not yet come up, Prevost, after a short reconnoissance, ordered Hoghton to attack. Detaching, therefore, the flank companies of the Seventh and the rifle company of the Twenty-third under Colonel Pakenham to turn the enemy's right, and the Light Infantry Battalion to do the same on their left, Hoghton led the rest of the Seventh and one company of the First West India against their front, and soon drove them back with heavy loss. Pakenham then directed his three companies, supported by the Twenty-third, southward to the heights of Sourier, to which the French had brought forward troops from the fort, and where

they stood on advantageous ground with a few field-1809. guns. The enemy repelled more than one attack, but were finally driven back to their entrenched camp; and Prevost, though still without a gun, boldly held the captured position within three hundred yards of the enemy's cannon. The action had cost him just under two hundred and fifty men killed, wounded, and missing.<sup>1</sup>

On the following day Beckwith extended his position Feb. 2. towards the west, and made an effort to carry the advanced redoubt of the entrenched camp by assault. He was met by a sharp resistance, and after losing nearly two hundred men,<sup>2</sup> abandoned the attack as likely to prove too costly. The enemy, however, deserted the redoubt, together with a work adjacent to it, during the night, and Beckwith occupied both on the night of the 5th. On the 5th likewise Maitland Feb. 5. led his division round the north of the town by Morne Bruneau to Negro Point, completing the investment of Fort Royal from the western side. A few days later a detachment of the Sixty-third under Colonel Barnes sailed under convoy of the King's ships *Pelorus* and *Cherub* up the leeward coast to Carbet, where the troops landed, and, marching upon St. Pierre, received the surrender of that town without firing a shot. Nothing then remained but to raise batteries against Fort Desaix,

1	Regiment	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
1/7th	. . . . .	1 off. 9 men	59 men	4 men
1/23rd	. . . . .	15 "	81 "	5 "
Gren. co. 1st W.I.R.	. . . . .	1 "	19 "	1 officer
L.I. Batt.	. . . . .	11 "	{ 33 " 2 off.	3 men
2	Regiment.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.
Casualties, 2nd Feb. 1809				
1/7th	. . . . .	21 "	{ 3 off. 60 men	3 men
1/8th	. . . . .	1 off. 4 "	13 "	0 "
1/23rd	. . . . .	4 "	21 "	1 "
Gren. co. 1st W.I.R.	. . . . .	1 "	0 "	0 "
Light Batt.	. . . . .	1 off. 15 "	{ 38 " 2 off.	0 "
Totals	. . . . .	<u>2 off. 45 men</u>	<u>5 off. 131 men</u>	<u>4 men</u>

1809. against which fire was opened from forty-two British  
 Feb. 19. mortars and cannon on the morning of the 19th. The  
 bombardment was continued without intermission until  
 Feb. 23. noon of the 23rd, when the French commandant sent out  
 a trumpet to propose terms. These being inadmissible  
 were rejected; and the batteries continued their fire  
 Feb. 24. until in the morning of the 24th the white flag was  
 hoisted. It was then agreed that the garrison should  
 be embarked to Quiberon Bay as prisoners of war and  
 there exchanged; but this arrangement was upset by  
 Napoleon, who, as was his practice, declined to release  
 any of his British captives; and the unfortunate  
 troops, one hundred and fifty-five officers and over two  
 thousand men, were shipped to England. Over five  
 hundred more, being in hospital from wounds and sick-  
 ness, were unable to sail. Admiral Villaret Joyeuse,  
 the Governor, from the esteem in which he was held,  
 was allowed, together with his aide-de-camps, to depart  
 in peace.

The casualties of the British, including those of the  
 seamen, during the whole of the operations amounted  
 to something over five hundred and fifty of all ranks,  
 killed, wounded, and missing.<sup>1</sup> The seamen, as usual,  
 rendered very conspicuous service in the arduous work  
 of dragging the heavy guns into position, and evidently  
 rejoiced in the change from the weary task of blockad-  
 ing. Their casualties did not exceed forty; and the  
 heaviest of the fighting fell upon the Seventh, the  
 Twenty-third, and the Light Infantry Battalion, which  
 last appears to have been composed chiefly, if not entirely,

<sup>1</sup> Casualties :—

	Killed.		Wounded.		Missing.
Navy . . .	7 N.C.O. and men	4 off. 19	N.C.O. and men		
Army 3 off. 116	" "	14 "	393 "	" "	3 men.
Total 3 off. 123	" "	18 "	412 "	" "	3 men.

Details of chief regimental casualties :—

7th . . .	30 N.C.O. and men killed	3 off. and 143	men wounded.
23rd . . .	20 " " "	2 " 100	" "
L.I. Batt. 1 off. 27	" " "	6 " 85	" "

of black troops. The operations seem to have been 1809. extremely well managed in every respect, for the deaths from sickness did not exceed thirty-two, nor were there at any time, apart from the wounded, many more than four hundred men in hospital. Yet the marches at the outset were extremely severe, and the troops were exposed to great fatigue and hardship from incessant rain. Beckwith indeed pointed with pride to the fact that he could send back Prevost's division to Nova Scotia with the smallest loss ever known upon such service, sixty-one having been killed or died of wounds, and twenty-five only having succumbed to sickness.<sup>1</sup>

The departure of this division on the 9th of March March 9. was, however, a heavy blow to the General, for the operations were hardly concluded before the Admiral again called upon him for soldiers to man the fleet. This was especially hard upon Beckwith, since he could not for the present leave Martinique with a smaller garrison than three thousand men. A month later, at the beginning of April, there came a new complication. April. A French squadron of three line-of-battle ships and two frigates arrived in the West Indies from L'Orient, and took refuge in the islands called the Saints, where they were promptly blockaded by Cochrane. Beckwith no sooner learned of this than he sent a detachment of twenty-eight hundred men<sup>2</sup> with ten pieces of artillery under General Maitland to reduce the islands, and so to ensure the capture of the squadron. Maitland sailed from Martinique on the 12th of April, and, after a day April 12. spent in reconnaissance, landed on the morning of the 14th upon an open beach on the leeward side of Terre en Haut, the most easterly of the group, unmolested except by a distant cannonade from the neighbour-

<sup>1</sup> Beckwith to Sec. of State, 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th, 28th Feb. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Detachment of R.A. Flank cos. R. York Rangers.

" 15th. R. York Volunteers.

3/60th. 3rd W.I.R.

Flank cos. 4/60th. Detachment, 8th W.I.R.



1809. ing island of Cabrit. The enemy was found to be occupying the highest point of the island, a hill named Mont Russel, one thousand feet above him ; the ascent being at an angle of fifty degrees and the ground covered with scrub and prickly pear. Maitland at once attacked this body with two companies<sup>1</sup> of the Sixtieth, which drove it off with great gallantry, inflicting heavy loss. From the summit thus gained Maitland obtained a sight of the enemy's camp, of the three forts on the island, and of the enemy's fleet, but was prevented from advancing further by the cannon of Cabrit on his left flank. He therefore landed two heavy howitzers, and by the indefatigable work of his gunners was able to construct a battery and open fire upon the ships at six o'clock on the same evening. Within an hour the French squadron got under way, and Maitland at once communicated the fact to the Admiral by signal, who lost no time in giving chase.

- April 15. Maitland then re-embarked the greater number of his troops, leaving a detachment to dislodge the enemy from a position near which he intended to land. This was soon done ; the force on the ships was again set on shore, and the construction of a mortar battery was begun at a point which commanded at once Fort Napoleon, above the principal anchorage, and the fort on the island of Cabrit. Midway between Fort Napoleon, and Fort Morel, at the northern point of Terre en Haut, was a central ridge above the chief town, which was held by the enemy. After surprising and destroying a French picquet of thirty men upon this ridge on the night of the 15th, Maitland on the April 16. night of the 16th occupied the position with three companies of blacks. The French poured out of the

<sup>1</sup> Maitland in his report says the *rifle* companies, from which the inference would be that the entire regiment was not armed with rifles ; but against this is the fact that Beckwith in a General Order of 14th May 1809 directed the Fourth Battalion to apply for new rifles of proper length and calibre, similar to those in the hands of the Third Battalion. Two companies, however, only were engaged, one of each battalion present.

forts and attacked this detachment at eight o'clock on the morning of the 17th; but the negroes,<sup>1</sup> though under fire of grape from two forts and of round shot from a third, held their own most gallantly, and repulsed the enemy with loss. About noon the French commandant sent in a flag of truce; and after a short negotiation the garrison of the Saints, numbering from seven to eight hundred men, surrendered as prisoners of war. It may seem strange that so considerable a force should have made so weak a resistance; but the mystery is explained by the fact that six hundred of them were recruits sent out from France to reinforce Guadeloupe, and only just landed from the ships of war. Almost certainly they were refractory conscripts who had tried to evade service, and on that account had been sent out to serve in the West Indies. Small effort could be expected from these wretched homesick lads, and we learn without surprise that they made a poor figure in the field.<sup>2</sup>

This little enterprise, so brilliantly conducted, cost the British no more than six of all ranks killed and seven wounded; but it is significant of the dangers of the work that, of the two officers who fell, one met his death by falling from a precipice. Within a week of his departure for the Saints, Maitland had returned to Martinique, and Beckwith then bent his thoughts at once to Guadeloupe. The Governor, M. Ernouf, was arming and organising the negroes for its defence, and therefore it could not be attacked too soon. Moreover, the island was a centre for depredations against British commerce; and the Navy had shown itself impotent to blockade it effectively, whether to prevent ships from putting to sea or to exclude reinforcements from France. It was the end of September before Beckwith received the Secretary of State's sanction for the enterprise, and then only conditionally if it promised to

<sup>1</sup> 2 cos. 3rd W.I.R., 1 co. 8th W.I.R.

<sup>2</sup> Maitland to Beckwith, 18th April, in Beckwith to Sec. of State, 20th April 1809.

1809. be easy of accomplishment. Meanwhile the sickly season had been very fatal. Between the 1st of January and the 1st of November 1809, close upon seventeen hundred men had died, while desertion and discharge of invalids increased the casualties to over two thousand; and, since only sixteen hundred men had arrived to make good these losses, the force in the West Indies had been seriously diminished. Moreover, Beckwith reckoned that, for the safety of British commerce, St. Eustatius and St. Martins must also be taken and occupied; to accomplish which he considered that he would require a reinforcement of at least two thousand men.<sup>1</sup>

1810. Late in December the second battalion of the Sixtieth returned to Barbados from England; and, after waiting yet a few weeks for a draft of artillery-  
Jan. 22. men, Beckwith on the 22nd of January 1810 sailed for Guadeloupe with something over seven thousand men. The force was organised into two divisions, under Generals Hislop and Harcourt, and a Reserve, each of the two divisions comprehending two brigades, and the Reserve one.<sup>2</sup> After two days' detention at

<sup>1</sup> Beckwith to Sec. of State, 28th June, 30th Sept., 22nd Oct., 16th, 26th Dec. 1809. Sec. of State to Beckwith, 12th Aug., 2nd Nov. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> *First Division. Maj.-Gen. Hislop.*

*3rd Brigade:* Brig.-Gen. Maclean. 2nd Batt. L.I. 500. (Light cos. of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 8th W.I.R.): 90th,\* 500; 8th W.I.R., 500.\*

*4th Brigade:* Brig.-Gen. Skinner. Det. 13th and 63rd, 600; York L.I. Vols. 200; 4th W.I.R.

*Second Division. Maj.-Gen. Harcourt.*

*1st Brigade:* Brig. Gen. Harcourt. 1st L.I. Batt., 500; 15th, 300.\* Batt. cos. 3rd W.I.R., 400.

*2nd Brigade:* Brig.-Gen. Barrow. Grenadiers, 300; 25th, 600; \* 6th W.I.R., 350.\*

*Reserve:* Brig.-Gen. Wale. 5th Brigade. Grenadiers, 300; Royal York Rangers, 900; Royal Artillery, 300.

The corps marked thus (\*) kept their flank companies with them. The two battalions of Grenadiers and Light Infantry were therefore probably made up from corps not otherwise represented in the force.

Rupert's Bay in Dominica, because some of the trans- 1810.  
ports had fallen to leeward, the First Division and  
Reserve sailed on the afternoon of the 26th, anchored Jan. 26.  
on the next day at Islet du Gosier, off the south coast  
of Grande Terre, and on the 28th made their way in Jan. 28.  
flat boats and small craft south-westward across the  
bay to Port Sainte Marie, where they landed unopposed.  
On the same day the Third Brigade advanced south-  
ward along the coast as far as Capesterre, with the  
Fourth Brigade a little in rear of it; and on the 30th Jan. 30.  
the entire division reached Trois Rivières, practically  
unmolested. The enemy had prepared fortified positions  
on the heights of Dolé immediately to westward of  
Trois Rivières; but these, together with the guns in  
them, were abandoned upon the approach of the British  
Light troops; and the First Division was left untroubled  
while it halted for two days to obtain supplies from the  
fleet.

Meanwhile on the 29th the Second Division had Jan. 29.  
sailed from the Saints and made a demonstration before  
Trois Rivières; but in the night it passed on, rounded  
the most southerly point of Guadeloupe, and anchored  
off the village of Vieux Habitants. On the following Jan. 30.  
morning the force landed unopposed; and Harcourt,  
after moving a short distance down the coast to south-  
ward, marched inland in two columns by two parallel  
roads, which seemed to lead towards an entrenched  
position upon the heights of Bellair, among the  
mountains about three miles from the coast. The left  
or more northerly of these columns became engaged with  
the enemy's light troops above Vieux Habitants, and  
after a sharp skirmish drove them back; but no further  
progress could be made on that day. The right-hand  
column was obliged to return, finding that the road  
which it had taken ran for little more than a mile and  
a half, and to join the left-hand column on the road by  
the coast. The entire division therefore bivouacked  
together for the night, and on the following day Har- Jan. 31.  
court succeeded in bringing it up, by a road still farther

1810. to the south, to a ridge parallel to Bellair and about twelve hundred yards from it. From this point he attempted to turn the position by the north, but found the deep ravines and the extreme ruggedness of the country insurmountable obstacles, and in the end was fain to halt and send for his artillery.

The enemy's design now became manifest. Possession of Guadeloupe turned mainly upon the possession of the town of Basseterre and of the fort, known to us in 1794 as Fort Matilda, which adjoined it. The French commander, General Ernouf, having few troops to his hand except militia and other raw levies, had established them in two strong positions in the mountains to north-east and north-west of the town, threatening the flank of each British division, and compelling the attacking force to turn aside and deal with him in the mountains before they dared to approach Basseterre. Beckwith's plan, on the other hand, was first to seal up all egress to westward from the main stronghold at Bellair by means of Harcourt's column, to drive Ernouf's eastern division into Bellair itself and, thus holding the entire French force cooped up against the impassable mountains on the north, either to carry their position by storm or to force them to surrender.

To return now to Beckwith's column at Trois  
 Jan. 30. Rivières, the General's first care on the 30th was to drive the enemy from the batteries on the coast, and thus enable the fleet to anchor in Anse des Trois Rivières; his next to reconnoitre in force the ridge of Petrizel, strongly fortified with redoubts and entrenchments, which barred his further advance to westward. The enemy thereupon opened a terrific fire, which caused only two casualties among the British but apparently brought about a panic among themselves, for on the  
 Jan. 31. following morning the entire ridge was found to be deserted. There remained, however, yet another fortified position, that of Palmiste, a little farther to the westward, covering the only practicable passage over the  
 Feb. 2. river Galion. After a day's halt to obtain supplies from

the fleet, Beckwith advanced upon this place in two <sup>1810.</sup> columns, the right column moving directly upon it, the left column, led by Beckwith himself, marching farther to the south over very high ground through the defile of Walkannar, to turn the enemy by their right. The movement was conducted with admirable precision. The French gave way with little resistance; and on the following day Beckwith crossed the Galion, and posted <sup>Feb. 3.</sup> his troops astride of all the roads leading northward from Basseterre, so as to sever completely Ernouf's communications with the town.

This movement brought his division on to the ridge immediately opposite to Ernouf's main position on the eastern side; and meanwhile Harcourt with the Second Division had moved a little southward to the ridge of Beaupaire, between the villages of Beaupaire and St. Louis. With the assistance of the Navy he had brought up two six-pounders, two howitzers and two mortars with which he opened fire on the 3rd. <sup>The Feb. 3.</sup> enemy attempted a sortie against him, which was repulsed with loss; but Harcourt, in obedience to Beckwith's orders, forbore for the moment to assault until his chief should have made the attempt from the eastern side. Here the French position was covered by a river called the Rivière Noire, an obstacle which had been so carefully fortified by Ernouf that Beckwith, doubting the success of a general assault, ordered Colonel Wale to march with the Reserve far into the mountains during the night, and to turn it by the north.

Wale accordingly moved off, but presently met a guide, who promised to lead his brigade across the river at a much nearer point, stipulating only that the march should be made by day owing to the difficulty of the road. The Colonel therefore decided upon a direct attack, and at four in the evening of the 3rd led the York Rangers upon the appointed crossing-place, leaving the rest of the brigade to make a demonstration near the only bridge, that of Nozière, over the river.

1810. The guide conducted him faithfully; but the passage of  
Feb. 4. the stream required to be forced in the face of abatis  
lined with troops, and of obstacles of every description.  
His soldiers, however, soon accomplished this, and,  
after a blind scramble through rocks and bushes, the  
three leading companies of the Royal York Rangers  
pushed forward in three columns, reserving their fire,  
while the remainder of the battalion followed them more  
slowly, directing their volleys upon the flanks of the  
enemy. Near the summit of the hill the ascent became  
more difficult, and a weak battalion of steady French  
troops opened a most destructive fusillade from behind  
abatis and stockaded redoubts; but the three gallant  
companies held their fire until within twenty-five  
yards of the defenders, when after one volley they  
charged with the bayonet and in a few minutes routed  
the French completely.

This little action lasted for an hour and a half, and  
cost the York Rangers nine officers and one hundred  
and five men killed and wounded. Wale himself was  
disabled by a bullet; Major Henderson, who com-  
manded the Rangers, and his two senior captains were  
also struck down. The effect of the attack was, how-  
ever, immediate. The French commandant, seeing his  
flank turned, hoisted the white flag; nor was he  
without justification, for, though he had begun the  
campaign with over three thousand men, chiefly  
colonial troops, these had dwindled continually until  
few were left to him except his single regiment of the  
Line. Nevertheless it is remarkable that the First  
Division and Reserve of the British conducted the  
whole of their operations without a single gun, and that  
the Second Division never fired a cannon-shot until the  
day before the capitulation of the French.<sup>1</sup> Altogether  
the campaign was creditable to Beckwith and to  
the troops. The casualties did not exceed fifty-two  
killed and two hundred and fifty wounded, but such

<sup>1</sup> Beckwith to Sec. of State, 9th Feb. 1810, enclosing the  
reports of the divisional generals.

operations in so rugged a country are necessarily most arduous.

Guadeloupe having been subdued, Beckwith without delay sent General Harcourt with a small force<sup>1</sup> to capture St. Martins and St. Eustatius. The former island being shared by the French and Dutch, Harcourt had to deal with two distinct garrisons, the one of twenty-one and the other of eighty-eight men, both of which at once surrendered to overwhelming force on the 14th and 15th of February. St. Eustatius with a Dutch garrison of fifty-six men also yielded without resistance on the 21st; and the power of France in the West Indies was thus practically extinguished. On the other hand, there were now no fewer than seventeen different stations to be held by British garrisons; exclusive of the Saints and Mariegalante, both of which the Admiral treated as an appanage of the Navy, appointing Governors, raising taxes, and establishing custom-dues with the freedom of an independent sovereign. It is true that there could now be little fear of a French attack upon any of the islands, from want of a base of operations in the Archipelago; but the internal condition of the Antilles was by no means satisfactory. The negroes, as we have seen, were still restless, having not yet forgotten the insurrection of 1795, and the revolutionary element was by no means extinct in the French possessions. Guadeloupe in particular was the refuge of the dregs of the West Indian population, attracted thither from all parts by the prospect of privateering. The French Governor had only kept these vagabonds in order by the greatest severity, and they were now the more desperate from nakedness and starvation. Moreover, dangerous elements were not wanting in Beckwith's own regiments. Out of a total of twenty battalions, ten only, many of them miserably weak, were genuinely British. Of the remaining ten, five were West India Regiments, among

<sup>1</sup> 9 cos. 25th; 1 co. 4th W.I.R.; det. of R.A. with two 8-inch howitzers.



1810. which there had lately been many cases of mutiny ; two belonged to the Sixtieth, and were composed very largely of aliens ; and the remaining three were nondescripts, also containing a large proportion of foreigners. Of these last the York Rangers were a loyal and gallant body of men ; the York Light Infantry Volunteers were made up chiefly of Dutchmen ; and the West India Rangers were full of convicts, French deserters, and French prisoners, who deserted so rapidly that the corps was in daily danger of dissolution, and at best was a source of as much anxiety as safety.

In the circumstances Beckwith pressed strongly for two good British battalions, but was answered that the calls for troops in Spain and the Mediterranean, added to the unfortunate prevalence of Walcheren fever at home, prevented the despatch of reinforcements to the West Indies. "This is a perpetual Walcheren," answered Beckwith with much truth and force. "Our annual loss may be taken at two thousand dead and invalided." The argument was shrewd ; but circumstances, which shall presently be narrated, prevented it from carrying any weight ; and since affairs in the West Indies have been anticipated so far, it may be said once for all that Beckwith's British battalions were allowed to dwindle steadily to the close of the war, until at length he was left practically with little except African negroes and foreigners, of which last an ever-increasing proportion were French prisoners. French intrigues found one centre in the Swedish island of St. Bartholomew, and a second in the United States, from which agents were dispersed all over the Archipelago. There were disturbances in Martinique in 1811, which were rightly put down with extreme severity, and there was a mutiny in a company of the Sixtieth at Tobago, which, had it occurred at some place nearer the French islands, might have led to incalculable mischief. Nevertheless, thanks in part to Beckwith's vigilance, but also in great measure to good fortune, no serious harm came of the Government's very questionable policy ;

though it must be remembered that, only by taking this 1810. tremendous risk, were Ministers able to prosecute serious operations in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Here, then, we take leave of military affairs in the Carribean Sea until the year of Waterloo.

<sup>1</sup> Beckwith to Sec. of State, 24th, 25th Feb., 19th June 1810 ; 4th Oct., 13th Nov. 1811 ; 5th Nov. 1812.

## CHAPTER XXV

1809. To return now to England, the news of the battle of Coruña came at a trying moment to a much harassed Ministry. The agitation over the Convention of Cintra had not yet subsided, and the vote of thanks to Sir Arthur Wellesley was likely to be made an occasion for unpleasantness on the part of the Opposition. Worse than this, a great scandal was abroad concerning the Duke of York's conduct as Commander-in-Chief. Lastly, provision was needed for recruiting the Army for another year, and, when this was done, there would remain the difficult and delicate task of choosing for it a fitting sphere for operations. For it must not be forgotten that the first venture of the British in Spain had closed in gloom, if not in disaster. To us who know that by the opening of 1809 the Spanish ulcer, which was destined to eat away Napoleon's power, had fastened upon him beyond hope of eradication, Sir John Moore's campaign seems but the prologue to the greater drama of the five following years. The episode wore no such comfortable appearance to our forefathers. The curtain had fallen upon a scene of victory indeed, but also of horror and distress. The *Gazette* might proclaim loudly the success of the battle of Coruña, but the text had its grim commentary in the twenty-six thousand ragged, filthy, and exhausted soldiers who had come home with the despatch. As to the Spanish armies, the fair hopes raised by Baylen had been shattered by defeat upon defeat. It was small wonder

that many in England conceived the play in Spain to be played out.

Parliament met on the 19th of January, and within 1809. less than a week Castlereagh's troubles began. On the 25th he rose to move the erection of a monument to Jan. 25. Moore in St. Paul's Cathedral. He admitted that the expedition entrusted to Sir John had failed of its ultimate object, but he declared emphatically that no blame for the failure was attributable to the General, and he claimed that the operations of the British Army had effected a complete diversion in favour of the Spaniards. A roar of derisive cheers from the Opposition greeted Castlereagh's brave and chivalrous assumption of all responsibility for the miscarriage of the campaign, for an officious section of the press had already endeavoured to shield the Government by casting all blame upon Moore. The Minister retorted with dignified contempt that he could defend the Government as well as the General upon a fitting occasion, but that at least he would not be guilty of the indecency of fighting a party battle over a brave soldier's grave. Lord Henry Petty, later Lord Lansdowne, a prominent member of the Opposition, then seconded the motion with due acknowledgment of Castlereagh's championship of Moore, and the vote was carried without a dissentient voice. When, however, immediately afterwards Castlereagh moved a vote of thanks to Sir Arthur Wellesley for Vimeiro, there was more than one carping spirit who took exception to the proposal; for Moore had been a Whig, whereas Wellesley was actually a member of the Government. Nevertheless, when the motion came to a division, its opponents reduced themselves to a minority of one.

Two days later Colonel Wardle, late of the Fencible Jan. 27. Cavalry, brought forward in the Commons a series of charges against the Duke of York for corrupt employment of his patronage in the grant of military appointments, commissions, and promotion. It was resolved that the matter should be investigated by a committee

1809. of the whole House. The inquiry began almost immediately, and was pursued for three weeks in the discursive and casual fashion that was to be expected from such a tribunal. The true story was simple and unsavoury. For some years the Duke of York had been intimate with a courtesan who bore the name of Mrs. Mary Ann Clarke, until at length, in 1802, he set her up as his kept mistress in a distinct establishment, with an income of £1000 a year. The woman possessed, besides beauty and charm, no small share of cleverness, great self-possession, and much readiness of resource. Unfortunately she was also an unmitigated rogue. Her extravagance was unspeakable. The Duke paid over £16,000 for her in three years; but since she was, even so, in constant pecuniary difficulties, she endeavoured to extricate herself by trading upon his name, by swindling the unhappy shop-keepers who had trusted her, and lastly, by accepting bribes to use her influence with the Duke in the distribution of military patronage. Becoming aware in 1805 of her malpractices towards her tradesmen, the Duke resolved to cast her off, giving, however, a verbal promise to pay her a pension of £400 a year, provided that she conducted herself properly. The separation finally took place in 1806; but after little more than a year the pension was, with abundant reason, withdrawn. Hard pressed by her creditors, and raging with anger, the woman, in June 1808, wrote to let the Duke know that, unless the arrears of her pension were paid, she would publish all his letters and everything that had come to her knowledge during her intimacy with him.

This was blackmail pure and simple, and the Duke had the courage to defy it. Mrs. Clarke was as good as her word. She found a willing instrument in Wardle, who was the latest of her protectors; and some evidence exists that there was a regular band of conspirators, all of whom hoped to make money out of her proceedings. It was proved without difficulty that Mrs. Clarke had received hundreds of letters and not a few bribes from

various individuals to induce her to forward their interests, not only in the Army but in all branches of the public service, through her influence with the Duke. The woman was far too vain and far too shameless to deny the fact ; but she wished the House to believe that the Duke was aware that she took bribes, and herein she failed utterly. It was shown that the Duke from the first had fought manfully against all traffic in commissions, and that Mrs. Clarke was always nervous lest any report of her doings should come to his ears. Moreover, the only proof of the Duke's privity to her corrupt practices lay in a note which he declared to be forged ; and it was shown that Mrs. Clarke, among her various accomplishments, possessed that of imitating the Duke's hand-writing. The House, therefore, by an overwhelming majority acquitted the Duke of the abuses imputed to him ; and no one, I think, can read the evidence without concluding that this was a just verdict. The Duke, however, resigned the Commandership-in-Chief immediately, which was the only thing that he could do, but which none the less was nothing short of a national disaster. Wardle and Mrs. Clarke quarrelled before the year was out and went to law ; but not all the sneers, and they were many and bitter, over the collapse of the conspirators could replace at the Horse Guards the best Commander-in-Chief that has ever ruled the army. 1809. March 17.

Here, therefore, was one great blow to Castlereagh, though incidentally the inquiry was not wholly of ill-service to the Government. The petty sordid details of the scandal—such is human nature—excluded all other considerations from the minds of the Commons, the press, and the public ; and there were many grave questions of foreign and military policy, besides one important military enactment, which pressed for the immediate attention of the Ministry. For the British was not the only Government which was beset with difficulties at the opening of the year 1809. Napoleon upon leaving Valladolid had journeyed night and day

1809. with extraordinary speed to Paris, to find upon his arrival that his enemies were conspiring against him on every side ; Fouché and Talleyrand in his household, the Royalists in La Vendée, Stein in Germany, and above all, Metternich in Austria. The last-named had realised early how serious were Napoleon's entanglements in Spain, and in October 1808 had sent a secret note to London, warning England against the delusive offers of peace forwarded by Napoleon and Alexander from Erfurth. The note further stated that the Austrian Government, feeling war to be inevitable, would seize the first opportunity of beginning it, but must await distinct provocation from France, in order not so much to justify its action in the eyes of Europe as to rouse the subjects of the Emperor Francis to enthusiasm. Austria counted herself already sure of the co-operation of the Porte, and reckoned that she could put four hundred thousand men into the field if assisted by England with money. She demanded, therefore, a subsidy of five million a year for her four hundred thousand men, besides half of that sum paid down for purposes of equipment, part of which should be immediately deposited at Malta in specie.<sup>1</sup>

Dec. 24. The British Ministers delayed all answer until the 24th December, when they cordially welcomed the overture, but declared the amount of the subsidy to be too great, especially in view of the quantity of specie already despatched to Spain. They pointed out further that the British military operations in the Peninsula were in themselves of decided assistance to Austria, and that it was impossible to submit a vote for a subsidy to Parliament until war had actually broken out. However, they showed their sense of the importance of an understanding with Austria by sending full powers to Mr. Adair at Constantinople, so that negotiations might be commenced without attracting the attention of France.

<sup>1</sup> Note of 11th Oct., enclosed in instructions to Bathurst, 16th Feb. 1809.

Thus it was practically certain that at least one 1809. power besides England would take advantage of Napoleon's entanglements in Spain to strike at him. It, therefore, behoved Castlereagh to take stock of the British Army, of its strength and distribution, of the resources for supporting and increasing it, and of the duties and enterprises already committed to it; and, lastly, to choose for it an effective field of operations. The Army at the end of January 1809 numbered, as nearly as can be calculated, about two hundred thousand effective rank and file, of whom at the moment rather more than one half were abroad, and rather fewer than one half at home. Of those abroad, the East Indies and Ceylon claimed about twenty-five thousand, the West Indies about twenty-one thousand, the Mediterranean twenty-two thousand, North America eight thousand, the Cape and minor garrisons together nine thousand. In addition to these, from eleven to twelve thousand men (including those of the King's German Legion) of the force originally sent to Portugal were still at Lisbon; and their numbers had been swelled by some three thousand stragglers, invalids, and detachments from Moore's army, who had drifted into the Portuguese capital, and had there been organised into provisional battalions.<sup>1</sup> Of the foregoing it may be said that the twelve thousand men in Lisbon and about the same number in Sicily were alone fit for offensive purposes in an European war, though these twenty-four thousand could be increased to thirty thousand by the King's German Legion and other foreign troops. Of the regular force at home, the greater part of the infantry consisted of second battalions, somewhat weak in numbers, and inferior in efficiency to the first battalions. There were, of course, also in England the regiments which had retreated with Moore to Coruña, but these could not for some time be fit to take the field.

The offensive force of Great Britain, therefore, was both feeble and ill-distributed, being split up into small

<sup>1</sup> Cradock to Sec. of State, 31st Jan., 8th Feb. 1809.



1809. detachments between Sicily, Lisbon, and the British Isles. Of the last named a considerable portion could be spared for foreign service, owing to the success of Castlereagh's Local Militia, which now numbered close upon two hundred thousand men in Great Britain. On the other hand, it was unsafe greatly to reduce the garrisons in Ireland; while among the troops at home there were nearly twenty Garrison and Veteran battalions, which were incapable of any but sedentary duties; and it must be remembered also that as yet there was no efficient force of police in Great Britain or in Ireland. Moreover, it was a disquieting fact that the casualties for 1808 numbered seventeen thousand, whereas ordinary recruiting had produced only thirteen thousand recruits, including two thousand boys, to fill the vacant places. The Army, therefore, entered upon the new year with a net deficit of four thousand men; and, seeing that offensive operations had already been sanctioned in the West Indies, it was not likely that the casualties of 1809 would show any diminution.

By this time it was recognised that the easiest and swiftest way of increasing the Army was to draw men from the Regular Militia; and the military authorities now came forward with a plan for absorbing that Militia into the Regular Army. The plan was exceedingly simple. Every regiment of the Line was to be formed into two battalions, and to be affiliated to some county. The first battalions, numbering in all one hundred thousand men, were to be recruited by voluntary enlistment for service all over the world; and the second battalions, numbering likewise one hundred thousand men, were to be recruited by ballot for home service only. Behind these was to come the Local Militia, two hundred thousand strong, each battalion affiliated to some county, and wearing the same uniform as its county regiment of the Line. The Local Militia was to be maintained by ballot, personal service being enforced and substitutes forbidden. Behind the Local Militia were to come one hundred

thousand Volunteers, receiving nothing from the State 1809. but their arms, and twenty-two thousand Yeomanry. The officers of the two regular battalions were to be interchangeable, according to their rank; the men of the second battalions were to be encouraged to enter the first, and the men of the Local Militia, in their turn, to enter the second battalions. Thus the anomaly of two descriptions of Militia would be avoided; the Regulars and the Local Militia would be based homogeneously upon a territorial organisation; the old Militia, now merged into the Army, would be twice as efficient as before, being commanded by regular officers; the Local Militia would likewise gain by taking the county gentlemen, heretofore absorbed by the Militia, for their officers; and the entire business of the Military Forces and of recruiting would be facilitated and simplified.

Castlereagh, however, shrank from so sweeping a change; and, inasmuch as the Duke of York's reforms have waited until our own time for adoption, it is possible that they would have been premature in 1809. The Minister, therefore, simply brought in a bill to permit rather more than twenty-eight thousand men from the Militia to enlist into the Line,<sup>1</sup> proposing, in consideration of the harshness of the ballot of 1807, to fill up the depleted Militia with voluntary recruits, encouraged by a bounty of ten guineas. By the 1st of June sixteen thousand Militiamen had passed into the Line; and on the 25th of May the Regular Army was returned at a strength, including foreign troops, of close upon two hundred and twenty thousand rank and file, or not far from two hundred and fifty thousand of all ranks.

Meanwhile, events began to move rapidly in Europe. Upon hearing of Austria's preparations, Napoleon at once became anxious as to the attitude of the Tsar, and wrote to him from Valladolid to use firm and

<sup>1</sup> 18,130 from the English Militia, 3654 from the Scottish, and 6708 from the Irish. Total, 28,492.

1809. energetic language to the Emperor Francis. He mentioned at the same time that he had four hundred thousand men ready to invade Austria, and that he was perfectly able to deal with her himself; but the urgency of his request belied his professions. Moreover, he did right to be anxious. Alexander was by this time weary of the French alliance. He had gained what he wanted—Finland and the Danubian principalities—and wished now to revert to his former friendships. However, he could not but make some show of compliance with Napoleon's request; and he accordingly urged Austria, under threat of withdrawing his ambassador from Vienna, not to attack France, remembering that if Austria was the aggressor he was bound to side against her, but not so if France took the offensive. The Emperor Francis sent a special envoy, Prince Schwarzenberg, to St. Petersburg; but upon him also the Tsar impressed the importance of caution, assuring him that if Austria gave provocation, Russia would fulfil her obligations to France. It was not difficult, nevertheless, for Schwarzenberg to apprehend the true direction of Alexander's sympathies.

More important, however, was the renewal of the Austrian Emperor's demands upon England. He professed disappointment with the answer to his overture, but announced that he would send Count Walmoden and Prince Starhemberg upon a special mission to London to adjust matters, and that he hoped the British Cabinet would honour his bills to the amount of £150,000 a month from April onwards. Early in March the preliminary proposals of these envoys were laid in advance before Canning. They were to the effect that Austria should receive two millions down, and £400,000 monthly while the war lasted; and that England should second Austrian operations with all her naval and military force. The sphere for England's military action was left to her own judgment, but Spain, Italy, and the mouth of the Weser were indicated as promising points. As to

Austria's own plans, it was stated vaguely that she would have two large armies in South Germany and in Italy, and an auxiliary corps in North Germany.<sup>1</sup> On the 29th of March, Walmoden arrived, though with no new suggestions to offer; but the British Government was already prepared to enter into a general engagement of alliance against France; and on the 24th of April a treaty to that effect was signed in London.

Meanwhile, war had actually begun. In the south, the Archduke John on the 12th of April invaded Italy from Carinthia, and defeated the Viceroy Eugene Beauharnais on the 16th at Sacile. A few days earlier the Tyrolese rose against the Bavarians, and within a week drove them from the province, capturing and destroying over ten thousand of the enemy. But these successes were checked by the misfortunes of the main army under the Archduke Charles. On the 6th he issued a general order to his troops that the liberties of Europe had taken refuge under their banners; and on the 12th he crossed the Inn and invaded Bavaria. On the 14th Napoleon quitted Paris, and on the 17th reached Donauwörth. Berthier had left the French troops so dangerously dispersed along a wide front from Ratisbon southward, that it needed all Napoleon's skill and good fortune to withdraw and concentrate them. He then took the offensive, and after five days' fighting, wherein the most notable action was the battle of Eckmühl, he forced the Archduke back on both banks of the Danube, stormed Ratisbon, and, following up his advantage, entered Vienna on the 13th of May. Here in the insolence of victory Napoleon issued on the 17th a decree deposing the Pope and annexing the Papal dominions to France. He had some reason for exultation. The Archduke John, owing to the disasters on the Danube, was compelled to fall back from Italy towards Vienna, and, having sustained a severe defeat on the Piave, to retire into Hungary.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Austria, 90. Aug. Wagner to Canning, 12th March, 22nd March 1809.

1809. leaving Tyrol to its own resources. The skill and gallantry of the peasants enabled them, fortunately, still to hold their own ; but, meanwhile, Eugene was able to follow up the Archduke John, and, after inflicting  
May 20. further losses upon him, to join Napoleon on the 20th at a very critical time. For the Archduke Charles, in spite of all reverses, had refused to relax his hold of the northern bank of the Danube over against Vienna ; and, in attempting to dislodge him on the 21st and 22nd, Napoleon met at Aspern and Essling with a reverse so serious as narrowly to escape disaster. His situation was the more perilous, inasmuch as the two bridges by which he crossed the Danube were swept away by a flood, leaving him no means of retreat. Under cover of darkness he withdrew his troops into the island of Lobau, and put forth all his energy to retrieve his position. He had lost in the fight one of his oldest comrades and ablest commanders, Lannes, Duke of Montebello, and little short of twenty-five thousand men. He now called to him every soldier that could be spared from all quarters for a supreme effort.

From the outset of the campaign the excitement in Germany had been intense. Maddened by shame and oppression, the Prussian people, under the leadership of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, had devoted itself to the foundation of patriotic clubs and the organisation of schemes of insurrection. So far had these plans been matured that in September 1808 the conspirators in Silesia had only with difficulty been restrained from a rising. Their ardour was, however, damped by the treaty under which the French had agreed, in that very month, to evacuate Prussia ; nor did their spirits revive until December, when the preparations of Austria for war seemed to be complete. The leaders then approached King Frederick William, and for the moment prevailed with him to take up arms in concert with the Emperor Francis. One of the chiefs of the patriots was sent to Vienna to come to an agreement with that Court, and

all seemed to be decided. At the end of December 1809. 1808, however, Frederick William went to St. Petersburg; and, though he left orders with Gneisenau to mobilise the army, that astute Minister was filled with apprehension as to the possible influence of the Tsar upon his King. His misgivings proved to be just. Alexander received the King and Queen of Prussia with every mark of attention, but advised them to submit to France; and this counsel was only too welcome to Frederick William's natural timidity. He suspended all warlike preparations, and, but for the remonstrances of Goltz, would have retracted the advances made to Austria. For the second time the hopes of the patriots were disappointed.

Disgusted with the King's pusillanimity, Gneisenau projected the formation of a Prussian Legion, composed of good patriots, for the Austrian service, and addressed himself to Hardenberg at Vienna in the hope of obtaining money from England. But before his plans could take definite shape, hostilities began, and all Germany was in a ferment. Frederick William was warned that, unless he went out to find war, war would come and find him. His Ministers pressed him urgently to take the final step, indeed strove desperately to commit him to battle. The King went so far as to summon Gneisenau to put the army in order for hostilities, and in helpless irresolution turned again for counsel to Alexander. But the Tsar himself was now seriously embarrassed. On the side of Finland he was distracted by a revolution in Sweden, which had driven the mad King Gustavus from the throne, and in the March 29. south by the rupture of his negotiations with the Porte, and a renewal of war with Turkey. Moreover, since Austria had been the aggressor, he was bound by his engagements to take the side of France. He had therefore given orders for the concentration of an army upon the frontier of Galicia, though with secret assurances to Schwarzenberg that he had no intention of conquering the province, and had issued directions to

1809. the Russian generals to avoid any combat. With his hands so full it is hardly surprising that Alexander should have given no encouragement to Frederick William. He was willing, he said, to stand by Prussia in case of an unprovoked attack upon her ; but, as regards Austria, he must fulfil his obligations to Napoleon. In blank dismay, Frederick William for the third time went back upon his half-formed resolution, and decided to abstain from war.

Weary of waiting upon this feeble-spirited man, the patriot leaders resolved to act without him. They had long been in communication with England, in whom lay their chief hope of support, and they determined now to throw themselves upon her generosity. Singularly enough, however, one of their agents, though apparently without full authority, had already approached the British Government. This agent was one Ludwig Kleist, who, it seems, bore credentials from the central insurrectionary Committee at Berlin, or at any rate from Count Chazot, the commandant in that capital and one of the chiefs of the insurrectionary organisation. It does not appear, however, that his mission was sanctioned by the real heads of the movement, such as Gneisenau and Blücher, the latter of whom knew Kleist to be an untrustworthy man who had gambled away his own and his wife's fortunes and was deeply in debt. Kleist was none the less an admirable actor ; and it is evident that his address, his activity, and his patriotic professions imposed upon the Committee, which, with very insufficient knowledge of his character, despatched him on a mission to England. He arrived in London in March, and made his way at once to the Foreign Office. According to his report, the whole country between the Rhine and the Elbe was prepared to rise without waiting for Prussia to declare war ; fifty to sixty thousand men were ready to take up arms upon the first collision between the French and Austrians, and, as they had already procured muskets, they required from England only powder, cannon, and money.

Kleist then put forward the following proposals <sup>1809.</sup> upon behalf of his principals. They would engage, he said, to raise ten thousand men between the Rhine and Weser for the British service ; to occupy Hamburg, Bremen, and East Friesland, so as to secure for England ports of communication and bases of operations ; to surprise Magdeburg, where they were in secret treaty with the inhabitants ; and, with the help of a British fleet, to capture Stralsund. He further promised that Napoleon's Westphalian army would come over in a body to the insurgents, as would also the Prussian Army, unless Frederick William consented to declare war ; and that, to encourage him to do so, the insurgents would hand over to him the port of Stettin. In return, Kleist required that England should land six thousand men in Hanover to support an insurrection, should despatch a fleet to the Baltic to watch the mouths of the Ems, Weser, and Elbe, and should establish depots of arms at Heligoland, as also in the islands of Bornholm and Erdholm, which should be seized for the purpose, so as to enable stores of war to be thrown into Prussia.

There is something rather magnificent about these proposals put forward by a mere adventurer who, though incredibly vain, self-seeking, and ambitious, was probably not wholly devoid of patriotic feeling. The British Cabinet, looking to his credentials, not unreasonably took him very much at his own valuation ; Canning, in particular, being favourably inclined to the choice of North Germany as a sphere of operations. Kleist had more than one interview with Ministers, with the result that by the 19th of April they agreed to send arms, ammunition, and clothing in large quantities to Heligoland ; and, without committing themselves to a disembarkation in Hanover or to the seizure of Bornholm and Erdholm, they promised further to send to the Baltic a sufficient squadron to maintain communication between England and North Germany. Kleist urgently demanded £50,000 in specie



1809. for the immediate requirements of the insurrection, but Ministers were sufficiently cautious to reduce the sum to £30,000, with which they despatched him upon his way. They also sent with him an accredited companion, Lieutenant Maimburg, with orders to ascertain the preparations and needs of the insurgents, and to give them every assurance of good-will if their plans were countenanced by the King of Prussia, but otherwise to hold out to them no encouragement whatever.<sup>1</sup>

So disjointed were the plans of the insurgents, or so imperfect the discipline of their subordinate leaders, that there were two sporadic risings even before Kleist  
April 22. left England. On the 22nd of April the peasantry of Westphalia began to assemble in arms, and presently received a chief in Dörnberg, a Colonel of Chasseurs under Napoleon's Westphalian government, who led them upon Cassel. His levies were met by the troops of the Government not far from the city—the very troops that, according to Kleist, were waiting to join the patriots—and dispersed to the four winds by a single volley. The insurrection instantly collapsed; and Dörnberg fled for his life to Bohemia. The other outbreak was more formidable. Among the Prussian officers who had distinguished themselves in the disastrous campaign of 1806 was a certain Major Schill, a man of remarkable bravery, of great wealth in petty resource, of surprising activity and much power of working on the minds of private soldiers and of raw assemblies. He possessed, in fact, all the gifts of a successful partisan, and may be compared to such men as Peterborough, Tarlton, and Sir Robert Wilson in our own service. But to these qualities were joined the defects which too often beset his kind. He had mother-wit, but neither knowledge nor education; and his vanity and jealousy were such that he could endure no rival nor even a subordinate of superior talent. At this time he commanded a regiment of hussars in Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> For Kleist's relations with the Government, see Record Office, F.O. 80.

Without disclosing his intention to a soul, he led his 1809. men south-west to Wittenberg to promote an insurrection upon his own account. The power of his name was such that all were eager to take service with him ; but he rejected every offer to arm the population, and would take no advantage of the preparations of the patriots, being, in fact, quite incompetent for higher command than that of a couple of thousand men, or for greater operations than partisan warfare. Soon after crossing the Elbe his courage failed him, and but for the protests of his officers he would have returned eastward, though all hope of success lay in the provinces to the west. First directing his steps towards Magdeburg, an immense depot of arms and stores which was feebly garrisoned and would have been a priceless acquisition, he turned from it at the first sign of resistance, and retired north-eastward to Mecklenburg, without an effort to prevent the assembling of French troops against him. Being presently pressed by two corps of Danes and Dutch, he retired to Stralsund, where his men were overpowered by greatly superior forces, and he paid for his mistakes with his May 31. life.<sup>1</sup>

These two abortive attempts, however disquieting for the moment to Napoleon, effectually closed all hopes of such a spontaneous national rising in Germany as had been seen in Spain. It does not appear, however, that the British Government heard of their disastrous issue before July ; and, meanwhile, the reports of their agents in Prussia and of Kleist himself were hopeful, and always urgent for British help with arms, ships, and troops. Austria also, both through Mr. Bathurst, the British envoy at Vienna, and through Count Starhemberg, who arrived in London in May, pressed hard for the disembarkation of a British army on the Weser. At the same time, Count Stadion, who now directed the councils of Austria, was equally anxious

<sup>1</sup> This estimate of Schill and the account of his operations are taken from Gneisenau's *Memorial to Canning*, 20th Aug. 1809.

1809. that the British force in Sicily should make a diversion in favour of the Austrian force on the Adige ; and in March he actually sent a messenger direct to Sir John Stuart at Palermo to explain the plan of campaign in Italy. It may easily be understood, therefore, that Ministers were much embarrassed by the difficulty of coming to a decision as to the sphere in which they should employ the British Army.

Nevertheless, upon one point, which shall presently be reviewed in greater detail, they took their resolution early. On the 7th of March Sir Arthur Wellesley drew up a memorandum, contending that Portugal could be defended by a force of thirty thousand British troops, in combination with the Portuguese ; and it was determined to make up the army in the Peninsula at once to that number, and to send him out to command it. But the question then arose whether Wellesley's army should not be still further increased ; whether, in fact, the whole strength of England should not be turned against that single point, for there could be no doubt of the effectiveness of such a diversion. In opposition to such a policy, however, stood the insuperable difficulty of finding specie to pay the expenses of the campaign. The same obstacle stood in the way of increasing the force in Sicily, whether to act in Italy or in Catalonia, though, in truth, the Cabinet seems never to have favoured the despatch of troops to this quarter. So far, therefore, the choice of Ministers was determined in great measure by circumstances. More troops could not be sent to Southern Europe ; wherefore any armament additional to that which was designed for Spain must necessarily look for its sphere of operations in the North.

Unfortunately, the difficulties of the Cabinet were aggravated by its own divisions. Canning had already quarrelled twice with his colleagues upon a great question of principle, whether, namely, Ministers should accept responsibility for the miscarriage of military operations, or should throw the blame wholly upon the

military commanders. In the case both of the Convention of Cintra and of Moore's campaign he had been for casting all blame upon the Generals, and he was the more urgent for this course in the latter case, because he had been strongly opposed to the policy of directing Moore to advance into Spain in the first instance.<sup>1</sup> These differences naturally set him at variance with Castlereagh, and that variance was intensified by the contrasted characters of the two men. Canning's talents were brilliant, Castlereagh's were less conspicuous but more solid; Canning based his judgment chiefly upon intuition, often, but not always, amazingly true, Castlereagh upon laborious comparison of facts; Canning was witty, fluent, and eloquent in speech and writing, Castlereagh ponderous, clumsy, and inarticulate; Canning was tricky, vain, and consumed by egoism, Castlereagh was straightforward and thought first of his country; finally, Castlereagh was a gentleman and Canning was not.

It does not appear that Canning was as adverse to the defence of Portugal as he had been to Moore's march into Spain; but it is certain that on the 24th of March, when Wellesley must already have received his orders to take command in Portugal, Canning wrote to the Duke of Portland to say that the Government, as then constituted, was unequal to the great task imposed upon it, and that unless this failing were remedied he should resign. The date is worthy of remark upon other grounds also. Kleist had arrived eleven days before, and must already have laid his proposals before Canning; and on that very day, the 24th, the new Commander-in-Chief, Sir David Dundas, had been summoned to a Cabinet Council and asked if he could furnish fifteen or sixteen thousand troops for an immediate attack upon the island of Walcheren, and particularly upon Flushing, where a French squadron under Admiral Missiessy was moored at the moment. There had more than once before been question of an

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Life of Spencer Perceval*, i. 349.

1809. attack upon Walcheren—an attack of which Napoleon's correspondence shows that he was constantly apprehensive—but in the month of March 1809 there were particular reasons for favouring such an enterprise. The French squadron was actually within the port of Flushing, from which, owing to the shallowness of the water, the ships could only emerge one by one after removing all their guns, and even then only by favourable conjunction of wind and tide. Thus they would have needed a month to drop down to the mouth of the Scheldt, where, being disarmed, they would have fallen an easy prey to a British fleet; while, if mewed up in the harbour of Flushing, their surrender or destruction would equally have followed upon the capture of that town, and, if divided between port and roadstead, they could have offered less resistance than ever. The project, therefore, was alike feasible and inviting, though it would need to be executed with both speed and secrecy lest the enemy, upon the first alarm, should withdraw the ships up the river to Antwerp. There was, as it happened, abundant naval force to hand for the enterprise, but Dundas could not undertake to furnish the troops required of him, for the men who had fought at Coruña were still in weakly health, and not yet re clothed or re-equipped. Moreover, twenty thousand other troops were under orders for Portugal, and the Act for enlisting men from the Militia had not been law for a fortnight. The expedition was therefore abandoned; and it should seem that Canning at once seized the opportunity to bring forward the question of sending a force to North Germany, for on the March 25. very next day Kleist, pursuant to the Minister's request, formulated the whole of his proposals in writing.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the Duke of Portland carried Canning's letter to the King, who, shrewdly reading between the lines, saw that Castlereagh was the cause of Canning's

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Spencer Perceval*, i. 347-350; *Enquiry into the Expedition to the Scheldt*, p. 39; de Martel, *Walcheren*, pp. 147, 185.

discontent, and therefore suggested that he should be removed from the War Office to some other post. The Duke, never a strong man and now much shaken by ill-health, willingly accepted the idea, but, as is the way of his kind, strove to put off the evil day. He recommended, accordingly, that the new arrangement should be postponed until the prorogation of Parliament in June, when Lord Wellesley should take over the War Office, and that in the meantime not a word of the proceeding should be breathed to Castlereagh. He communicated it, however, to Lord Camden, who was Castlereagh's uncle, to Lord Bathurst, and to Lord Chancellor Eldon. To these confidants Canning presently added George Rose, the Secretary to the Treasury, and Mr. Speaker Abbott; and it should seem that the secret was ill-kept, for by the first week in March it had reached certain English travellers in Spain.<sup>1</sup> Canning had at first expressed contentment with the compromise, but in April he became impatient, and declared that it was absurd to wait until the end of the session for Castlereagh's resignation. Meanwhile, Castlereagh had been pressing forward the re-equipment of Moore's troops with all his energy, and on the 8th of May 8. May he required of the Commander-in-Chief a scheme of organisation for a force of thirty thousand men, with a reserve of twelve thousand more. By that time Dundas was in a position to furnish the thirty thousand troops, but not the reserve. This, however, was enough for Castlereagh. The Admiralty, being responsible for the protection of England against invasion, was urgent for the attack upon Walcheren; and on the 18th of May 18. May Castlereagh wrote to offer the command of the force above named to Lord Chatham. He had so far consulted none of his colleagues except the Duke of Portland upon this appointment, but he was able to assure Chatham of the Duke's approval, and did not doubt that of the rest of the Cabinet. Practically, therefore, the despatch of the expedition to the Scheldt

<sup>1</sup> *Spanish Journal of Elizabeth, Lady Holland*, p. 297.

1809. was determined on, though not irrevocably, by the beginning of May.<sup>1</sup>

It is very evident, therefore, that, notwithstanding all the efforts of Kleist and of the Court of Vienna, the British Ministers were not disposed to send a large force to North Germany unless Prussia openly declared war against France. I cannot myself believe that they were wrong. Thrice had British troops been sent to the Continent in reliance upon the support of Prussia, and even with the hope of heartening her to action, and thrice had the expectations of the British Government been disappointed. It was true that circumstances were now changed. Prussia had been humbled to the dust; but the temper of her people was rapidly rising, and three great men—Stein, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau—had come forward to work out her salvation. Still Stein had been banished since November 1808 by Napoleon's order, and Scharnhorst and Gneisenau only with infinite difficulty held their own against treacherous opponents at the Court of Frederick William. The King, as we have seen, had so far shrunk from drawing the sword; and, looking to the early failures of Austria in Bavaria, it was not likely that he would forsake his attitude of quivering neutrality. The success of the Archduke Charles at Aspern, however, promised to bring about a change, and the Emperor Francis sent a special envoy to Königsberg to press Frederick William once more to take up arms. The envoy, Count Steigentisch, arrived on the 15th of June, and found the monarch much shaken by Schill's escapade. At his first interview the King received him coldly; at the second he showed greater warmth and pressed him to stay at Königsberg; at the third he told him to be gone, because his presence gave umbrage to the embassies of Russia and France.<sup>2</sup> Prussian patriots were deeply disgusted, and determined that the only possible means of bringing their

<sup>1</sup> *Chatham MSS.* Castlereagh to Chatham, 18th May 1809.

<sup>2</sup> *F.O. Prussia.* Hahn to Sec. of State, 17th, 21st June 1809.

faint-hearted monarch to a decision was to kindle a 1809. successful insurrection in North Germany with the help of a British army. By the advice of Gneisenau, Blücher resigned his commission in order to place himself at the head of the rising ; and Gneisenau himself did likewise in order to be free to proceed on a mission to England.

All this was, of course, unknown as yet to the British Ministers ; but the behaviour of the Prussian King shows that they had formed a correct judgment of him. On the 29th of May Castlereagh again addressed the May 29. Commander-in-Chief, representing that the naval establishments of Napoleon in the Scheldt had already twenty line-of-battle ships under construction or completed, and asking his opinion as to the feasibility of destroying them. He added that, according to all reports, Northern France and Holland had never before been left so naked of troops as at present. On the 3rd of June 3. June Dundas replied at length that in a country so difficult as Flanders rapid operations were nearly impossible, and that the proposed service was one of the greatest risk. The Adjutant-general, Sir Harry Calvert, and the Military Secretary, Colonel Gordon, handed in opinions to the same effect, the latter characterising the operation as a most desperate enterprise. General Brownrigg, after premising that the force would require nearly eight thousand horses for its transport, considered that, in certain circumstances, it might succeed in taking Antwerp by a *coup de main* ; and General Alexander Hope likewise, while considering the operation unduly hazardous, opined that if executed with decision, it " might have some chance of success."

Altogether it would be difficult to find a stronger consensus of discouragement than is to be found in these five memoranda from the Horse Guards ; and it is probable that Castlereagh reverted for a moment to thoughts of North Germany. But two days later June 5. General von der Decken, who had been despatched thither to observe the actual state of things, returned



1809. and made his report. There was, he confessed, general discontent with French rule, especially in Hanover and the kingdom of Westphalia. In East Friesland also there was profound impatience of the sway of the King of Holland, and both there and in Westphalia there were organised systems of insurrection under distinguished leaders. But, on the other hand, the Low Countries appeared to be perfectly contented ; and it was doubtful whether the Germans anywhere would rise, unless encouraged by the presence of a British army and by a succession of Austrian victories. The Hessians were the most eager for an insurrection, in spite of Dörnberg's failure, which had been due to lack of arms and to news of Austrian defeats. Von der Decken concluded, therefore, that if a British force were sent to the Continent, it should first occupy East Friesland and then operate up the Weser towards Hesse. But, he added with strong emphasis, a British army could have no success in Holland or North Germany unless it received the support of the inhabitants, united in a single political body and acting under the orders of the British Cabinet and the British Government. Unless such a system were pursued from the very beginning, the French would in three months assemble a force sufficient to compel the British to re-embark.<sup>1</sup>

This intelligence Ministers naturally regarded as conclusive. Time was pressing. The best part of the campaigning season was already past ; the Archduke Charles and Napoleon were both girding themselves for a decisive battle on the Danube, and, if the weight of England was to make itself felt on the main continent of Europe, it must be thrown into the scale at once. Happily the tidings that Sir Arthur Wellesley had on the 12th of May defeated Soult at Oporto showed that the British troops were not idle ; but this stroke was not such as could be immediately felt at Vienna. On the 10th of June the arrival of the news of Aspern

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of Decken in W.O. I. 1119.

quicken the British Government to greater activity. 1809. Fresh intelligence of the dearth of soldiers in Northern France and the Netherlands confirmed their resolution; and the veteran Dumouriez declared that the moment for the expedition was come. "It is," he wrote, "the greatest service that you can render to Austria and to Europe. It is the most useful, brilliant, and natural diversion that you can make." After somewhat hasty consultation of two naval officers, Sir Home Popham and Sir Richard Strachan, the latter of whom had no knowledge of the Scheldt,<sup>1</sup> the Cabinet on the 21st of June finally decided to throw the main strength of England upon that river. This resolution was not taken without long and painful deliberation, and was due chiefly, if not entirely, to the unwillingness of Prussia to draw the sword. The reasons put forward for their action by Ministers, and fully accepted as valid by Starhemberg, were four in number. First of them was the general exhaustion of England's military and pecuniary resources, due to the number of troops maintained by her in Sicily, Portugal, and her colonial and Indian possessions, and to the subsidies furnished to Austria and Spain. The remaining reasons may be summed up as the dread of seeing their expeditionary force isolated after disembarkation and compelled either to fight its way to the Allies at great sacrifice, or to melt away to no purpose, being unable either to receive recruits or to re-embark with safety; and the apprehension lest they should find Prussia turn upon the British troops as enemies, because she had been too timid to declare herself in good time as a friend. Moreover, Starhemberg could not but admit that the sanguine hopes built by Austria upon the political state of Germany had been belied. On the other hand, the action of the force on the Scheldt, though intended principally for England's own benefit, would still be in the nature of a diversion, for it would keep all French troops in Holland from marching to

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, pp. 132, 133, 178, 284. *Chatham MSS.*, Dumouriez to Castlereagh, 13th June 1809.

1809. the Danube, and would be a distraction to Napoleon's reserves at Strasburg. Lastly, the force might still play its part on the Continent after the object of the expedition had been effected. The operations were designed to be of the nature of a surprise, and should therefore be soon over. Ten thousand men would indeed be required for the garrison of Walcheren, but the remainder would be free for employment in any part of Europe; and Canning assured Starhemberg that the Government would still be ready to send them to Prussia, if the King should declare against France. But unless there were a regular army to which the British troops could join themselves upon disembarkation, the British Ministers would not hazard their landing in North Germany.

Looking to all the circumstances, as also to past experience, I cannot but think that the Cabinet acted herein with sense and prudence. It was by blind reliance on reports of Dutch and German insurrectionists that Pitt and Dundas had so often frittered away the strength of England to no purpose. Moreover, the name of Hanover still roused jealousy in the British people. The idea of sacrificing British troops for the reconquest of that province was in their eyes unpardonable; and it was in this sense and no other that they would have construed the disembarkation of forty thousand men on the Weser. "It is sufficient to know this country," wrote Starhemberg from London, "the terrible responsibility of Ministers, the way in which they dread it, the incessant attacks which they constantly have to encounter in Parliament, the enormous cost (double of ours) of maintaining the army, the really embarrassed state in which they stand after enormous efforts made in the matter both of men and money, especially for Spain, to understand that the Court of London could hardly gather resolution to strike its first blow in North Germany, until assured that it should find a considerable army there, to which it should be auxiliary, and in which it could find

support.”<sup>1</sup> This strikingly sympathetic comment does not, however, excuse the real mistake of Ministers in committing a considerable force to an operation of extremely doubtful success when, by holding it in readiness for a month or two, they could have improved its quality, and probably have found a more profitable object for its energy elsewhere. But from the beginning to the end of this war Ministers, when they chanced to have troops at their disposal, could never be easy until they employed them somewhere, doubtless because factious politicians were always demanding with clamour and contumely for what purpose, if not for foreign service, an army was maintained. The despatch of the expedition to Walcheren is merely one of a hundred examples of the hopeless inadaptability of the British Constitution to war.

However, the decision was taken, and taken on the very day of the prorogation of Parliament. On the following day the Duke of Portland sent for Spencer Perceval, told him of the agreement made with Canning for the displacement of Castlereagh, and insisted that, after the decision taken by the Cabinet on the previous day, the agreement could not now be fulfilled. It was impossible, as he justly said, that Castlereagh, who for weeks had been toiling at preparations for this expedition and must be held responsible for them, should be removed from his office just when his plans were about to be executed. Horrified that such an underhand intrigue should have been going forward for so long unknown to him, Perceval wrote to Canning to protest against the concealment of the affair from Castlereagh. Canning answered curtly disclaiming all responsibility for such concealment; and he and Perceval then agreed to refer the matter to the Duke of Portland. Canning appears to have proposed a kind of compromise, whereby the management of the war in Spain should be committed to himself while still retaining the portfolio of foreign

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Austria. Starhemberg to Stadion, 20th July 1809, enclosed in Starhemberg to Sec. of State, 26th July 1809.

1809. affairs. Perceval expressed decided objections to this arrangement; and it was agreed that things should remain as they were until the issue of the enterprise should be known, the whole affair being still concealed from Castlereagh. Perceval chafed more and more under the sense that he was playing a dishonourable part. "This cursed business haunts me," he wrote, three

July 13. weeks later. The fact seems to have been that Canning was playing for a higher stake than the mere removal of Castlereagh. He perceived that the Duke of Portland's health must before long compel him to retire from office; he was ambitious to take the Duke's place in fact if not in name, and his design appears to have been to place Lord Chatham at the Treasury, in succession to the Duke, to use him as a puppet, and to wield all power himself.<sup>1</sup>

It was with this object, according to one account, that Lord Chatham was selected for the command of the expedition. Canning had little doubt of its success, and hoped that the fame of this achievement would facilitate Chatham's elevation to the first place in the Government.<sup>2</sup> This theory is hardly confirmed by the terms in which Castlereagh offered Chatham the command, though not incompatible with them; but, on the other hand, contemporary gossip represented Canning as strongly opposed to the whole enterprise.<sup>3</sup> Another account ascribes Chatham's appointment to the direct influence of George the Third, though apparently upon no higher authority than the general prejudice which loves to lay all mistakes during his long reign upon the patient shoulders of the King. More interesting is it to find that Sir David Dundas, under whom Chatham had served as a general both in peace and in war, considered him a very excellent officer, and the choice of him a very proper

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Life of Spencer Perceval*, i. 351-357, 362.

<sup>2</sup> Stanhope, *Conversations of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 393. Lord Ellesmere's *Recollections* confirm Stanhope.

<sup>3</sup> Yonge's *Life of Lord Liverpool*, i. 280.

choice.<sup>1</sup> In truth Pitt's brother was no ordinary man. 1809. He was very clear-headed, possessed excellent judgment and great firmness of character. In the Cabinet, where he seldom spoke until others had finished speaking, his counsel was sound, independent, and weighty to a remarkable degree. At the Office of Ordnance his administration brought the British Artillery up to a pitch of excellence unknown until his day. His great fault was an incurable indolence, and an unpunctuality which gained for him the name of the *late* Lord Chatham—defects which would seem to disqualify him for a charge which demanded above all things rapidity of execution.

Meanwhile Castlereagh had been labouring indefatigably over the work of equipping the troops and hiring transports. One hundred thousand tons of shipping were required, but no orders were given for procuring them until the 20th of May, and even then no indication was given of the amount that would be needed. Freight was both scarce and dear, owing partly to the demand for the army of Portugal; and the tonnage was not obtained except with difficulty and at a considerable rise of price. The troops also were unready, the re-equipment of several regiments being still incomplete at the end of June.<sup>2</sup> At last, in the second week of July, the embarkation began at Portsmouth and Deal, and in the Downs, and Castlereagh himself went down to Deal to witness it. There on about the 22nd he received the long-expected news from the Danube. Napoleon had extricated himself with amazing skill from the island of Lobau, and the decisive battle had been fought at Wagram on the 6th of July, ending in no great advantage to either party, but in the retreat of the Archduke and in the conclusion of an armistice at Znaim on the 12th. There was, however, yet hope that the armistice would not be converted into a peace, especially if the British diversion proved to be effective. On the afternoon of Wednes-

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry into the Expedition*, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 107-114, 122.

1809. day the 26th of July Chatham and his staff embarked  
 July 26. on board the *Venerable*, and on the following day came to anchor in the Downs. There the left wing of the army joined him from Portsmouth; Sir Richard Strachan, the naval Commander-in-Chief, shifted his flag to the *Venerable*, and at five on the morning of the  
 July 28. 28th the fleet sailed for the mouth of the Scheldt.

It was incomparably the greatest armament that had ever left the shores of England. The troops of all ranks numbered close upon forty thousand,<sup>1</sup> of which twenty-five thousand were embarked upon men-of-war, and the remainder upon transports. In all, the infantry numbered about thirty-three thousand, the cavalry rather more than two thousand, and the artillery about three thousand. The whole were organised, nominally, in two wings, and actually in six divisions, the cavalry being incorporated with the Light Infantry corps in each wing.<sup>2</sup> The battalions varied greatly in strength, some

<sup>1</sup> 1738 officers, 37,481 N.C.O. and men. Total, 39,219.

<sup>2</sup>

*Left Wing.*

1st Division.	{	Maj.-gen. Graham's Brigade: 3/1st, 2/35th, 2/81st.
Lieut.-gen. Sir J. Cradock.		Maj.-gen. Houston's Brigade: 2/14th, 51st, 2/63rd.
4th Division.	{	Brig.-gen. Browne's Brigade: 1/5th, 4 cos. 2/23rd, 1/26th, 1/32nd.
Lieut.-gen. Mackenzie Fraser.		Maj.-gen. Picton's Brigade: 1/36th, 2 cos. 2/8th, 77th, 1/82nd.
Light Troops.	{	Brig.-gen. Mahon: 9th L.D.
		Brig.-gen. de Rottenburg: 68th, 1/71st, 85th, 2 cos. 2/95th.

*Right Wing.*

Light Division.	{	Maj.-gen. Hon. W. Stewart's Brigade: 2/43rd, 2/52nd, 8 cos. 2/95th.
Lieut.-gen. Earl of Rosslyn.		Maj.-gen. von Linsingen: 3rd Dragoons, 12th L.D., 2nd Hussars, K.G.L.
		Maj.-gen. von Alten: 1st and 2nd Light Batts. K.G.L.
2nd Division.	{	Maj.-gen. Dyott's Brigade: 1/6th, 1/50th, 1/91st.
Lieut.-gen. Marquis of Huntly.		Brig.-gen. Montresor's Brigade: 1/9th, 1/38th, 1/42nd.

of them barely exceeding four hundred bayonets, while 1809. others reached one thousand, and the two battalions of the First Guards counted together twenty-four hundred men. Chatham's second-in-command was Sir Eyre Coote, an officer of great experience; and his chief staff officer was Sir Robert Brownrigg, Quartermaster-general at the Horse Guards, who apparently had been selected because he had pronounced the surprise of Antwerp to be a possibility.

The naval force was not less formidable—thirty-five ships of the line, twenty-three frigates and larger vessels, and over one hundred and eighty sloops, gun-boats, and other smaller craft. The Commander-in-Chief was Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Strachan, a brave and energetic officer, but eccentric in his conduct, very irregular in his hours on board ship, and of greater zeal than ability. Under him were Rear-Admirals Keats, Lord Gardner, and Otway, the first an excellent officer and the two last respectable. The Captain of the Fleet

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3rd Division.	{	Maj.-gen. Leith's Brigade : 2/11th, 2/59th,
Lieut.-gen. Hon.		1/79th.
T. Grosvenor.		Brig.-gen. Acland's Brigade : 2nd, 76th, 2/84th.

*Reserve.*

Lieut.-gen. Sir John Hope.	{	Brig.-gen. Disney's Brigade : 1 and 3/1st
		Guards; flank cos. 2/ Coldstream and
		2/3rd Guards.
		Maj.-gen. Sir W. Erskine's Brigade : 20th,
		1/92nd.
		Maj.-gen. Earl of Dalhousie's Brigade : 1 and
		2/4th, 1/28th.

(A battalion of detachments, 800 strong, is not included in the above distribution.)

*Artillery.*—1 troop Horse Artillery, 16 cos. Foot Artillery, Drivers, 1827 horses.

*Siege Train.*—70 cannon, 74 mortars, Congreve rockets.

*Staff Corps.*—(Engineers) 2 companies.

*Waggon Train.*—3 troops, 132 waggons, 238 carts of all descriptions, including 50 S.A.A. carts.

Horses embarked for the whole expedition, over 6000 (*Enquiry*, p. 111).

C.G.L.B., 29th June 1809. *Parliamentary Papers*, pp. 23-25. Duncan's *History of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 225-227. Record Office, W.O. vi. 27.



1809. was Sir Home Popham, who, in spite of his recent gross misconduct in the matter of Buenos Ayres, was, by reason of his experience of Holland, very improperly employed in this high and responsible position.

Upon the whole the leading officers of both services were not without talent ; but the enterprise demanded very exceptional gifts in both the Commanders, and very perfect co-operation between them. The Admiral's was infinitely the heavier charge. The number of sail actually under his directions exceeded six hundred, rather more than half of them transports, and the remainder men-of-war.<sup>1</sup> No such gigantic assembly of vessels had ever been placed under any British Admiral ; and, to make the responsibility still more formidable, the armament was bound for a coast where shifting shoals, wind, and tide made navigation more than ordinarily difficult and dangerous. Moreover, to add to all the unavoidable troubles, the expedition started late. Popham, who was at any rate a good and skilful seaman, had six weeks before urged upon Castlereagh the importance of time. "I see the season advancing fast," he wrote, "and if we are imperceptibly led on until the midsummer fine weather is past, we shall have the most dreadful of all difficulties, the elements, to encounter." "Every day lost is a loss of much valuable time," echoed Chatham ; "I think we should get on faster." Even when the coast should have been gained and a secure anchorage found for the shipping, the subsequent operations promised to be very delicate. The Army must be landed to capture the batteries on the banks before the Navy could sail up the river ; and, after the fleet had so sailed up, the question whether the destruction of the French vessels should be compassed by the military or the naval force demanded the most perfect understanding between General and Admiral. The British Navy has produced few officers who would have been equal to such a responsibility as was laid upon Strachan ; and

<sup>1</sup> The actual numbers were 264 ships of war, 352 transports. Total, 616. *Castlereagh Corres.* vi. 283.

even they would have needed an ideal military colleague. 1809. The task would have taxed the utmost powers and the best good fortune of Saunders working with Wolfe, or of St. Vincent working with Grey ; but the greatest men of the Navy had passed away, and, setting Collingwood aside, the Government hardly knew where to look for an Admiral. Keats and John Hope, both of them subordinates in this expedition, were better fitted to command it than Strachan and Chatham, though the troops were ready to make unusual exertions for Chatham for his great brother's sake. But no commanders could have sailed to the Scheldt at that time with any great confidence ; and old George the Third, when consenting to the operation, added with his usual shrewdness a telling word of criticism. "His Majesty could have wished that the information upon which the practicability of the expedition has been finally decided had not been so imperfect."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Castlereagh Corres.* vi. 282 ; the King to Castlereagh, 22nd June 1809.

## CHAPTER XXVI

1809. THE river Scheldt debouches into the sea by two main channels, named the East and the West Scheldt, the mouths of which are divided by the island of Walcheren. It is this command of both entrances that gives Walcheren its strategic importance. The East Scheldt itself has two branches—the northern, which leads up to Willemstadt, and with which we have no concern ; and the southern, which, though navigable for over forty miles, ends to eastward in a huge shoal commanded by the fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom.

The West Scheldt or Honte lies between Walcheren on the north and the island of Kadzand on the south. It has two main channels—the northern, called the Deurloo, which was commanded by the guns of Flushing, a strongly fortified town ; and the southern, called the Wielingen Channel, which was swept by the guns of five or six open batteries, situated above the point of Breskens, over against Flushing. In 1809 the two channels met under the cannon of these defences on the northern and southern shores, and formed a single waterway for practically the entire distance to Antwerp. Only opposite Ellewoutsdyk the single channel parted again into two branches, of which the southern was defended by the fort of Terneuse, the northern by a chain of redoubts which had been thrown up on the island of South Beveland from Borssele to Ellewoutsdyk. These two channels again became one within three or four miles, and led the navigator to the point of Bat,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At that time generally called Bathz or Batz.

where stood a formidable battery of heavy guns. Above 1809. Bat the next defences of the river were found at Fort Lillo on the northern shore and Fort Liefkenshoek over against it on the southern bank ; and here the French had constructed also a boom to hinder the passage of hostile warships. Above Lillo were more defences on both banks, ending finally in the citadel and town of Antwerp. From Flushing to Terneuse the distance by water was twelve to fifteen miles, from Terneuse to Bat some twenty to twenty-five miles, from Bat to Lillo about eight or ten miles, and from Lillo to Antwerp from ten to twelve miles.<sup>1</sup>

Since Flushing could not be taken without a regular siege, the strength of Chatham's force had been fixed with the idea that he should advance to Antwerp with a part of his troops, while the remainder should hold Flushing beleaguered ; rapidity of execution being of the utmost importance to the success of the expedition. The armament had accordingly been distributed into three divisions.

The first, consisting of thirty-four vessels of all descriptions, under Sir Richard Keats, and the Reserve of the Army, about eight thousand strong, under Sir John Hope, was designed first to seize some commanding points on the island of Schouwen, on the north shore of the East Scheldt, so as to ensure the safety of the anchorage, known as the Roompot, on the north shore of Walcheren and North Beveland. The troops were then either to land on North Beveland, or to descend the Veere Gat,<sup>2</sup> which divides North and South Beveland from Walcheren, disembark upon South Beveland, capture the fortress of Goes, and take in rear the fort of

<sup>1</sup> This description and these figures are taken from a MS. chart made by the Commander of the *Fisgard* in 1809-12. I am indebted to the courtesy of the Admiralty for permission to consult and photograph this chart.

<sup>2</sup> These directions were not really given as alternatives, the order as to North Beveland being superseded by that as to the Veere Gat, but, as shall be seen, resumed in consequence of experience gained on the spot.

1809. Borssele and the other neighbouring defences on the north bank of the western Scheldt. Hope was further charged to collect transport and supplies, and to patrol as far as possible towards the east end of the island.

The second division was made up of thirteen vessels, mostly small craft, under Commodore Owen, and Lord Huntly's division of about five thousand soldiers. Its function was to disembark a sufficient force upon Kadzand to overpower the riverward batteries and to capture the island. Lord Gardner's squadron was likewise told off for this service, which was of vital importance; for upon the possession of Kadzand depended the mastery of the Wielingen Channel and all chances of a speedy advance up the river upon Antwerp.

The third division was composed of thirty-seven vessels under Admiral Otway, with the left wing of the army under Sir Eyre Coote. This force, about twelve thousand men, was to disembark about Zoutelande on the south-west coast of Walcheren, and to devote itself wholly to the capture of Flushing and to the subjection of the island.

The whole of the troops above named were embarked on board vessels of war. The remainder, that is to say, Rosslyn's and Grosvenor's divisions, were to be carried on transports, and were ordered to remain in the Downs, under convoy of a squadron of four ships, until summoned to the Scheldt.

Chatham's instructions prescribed to him at large the capture or destruction of the enemy's ships, built or building, in the Scheldt; the destruction of the arsenals of Antwerp, Terneuse, and Flushing; the reduction of Walcheren; and the "rendering the Scheldt, if possible, no longer navigable by ships of war." If the whole of these objects should prove to be unattainable, as many of them as possible were to be compassed, and the army was then to return to England, leaving a sufficient garrison on Walcheren.

The general idea of the above dispositions was that,

as soon as the disembarkations had been effected, 1809. Rosslyn's and Grosvenor's divisions should be summoned; and that, while Coote contained Flushing, Chatham himself should advance with the whole of the rest of the Army, land at Santvliet, a little to the north of Lillo, and thence push forward upon Antwerp. But all plans subsequent to the landing at Santvliet were of the vaguest, because there was no information upon which to base them.<sup>1</sup>

Turning now to the side of the French, it has already been said that from the very first Napoleon had shown peculiar jealousy for the safety of the Scheldt. The vast preparation of armaments in England at the beginning of 1809, and the incessant reconnaissance of the river by British frigates and small craft, kept the French commanders continually on the alert; and twice in the course of January special orders were sent to them from Paris to look to the safety of Flushing. French anxiety increased as Napoleon kept calling troops out of France towards the Danube; and in April information seems to have reached Paris of Castlereagh's first plan of the expedition, for Zoutelande was known to be the chosen place of disembarkation in Walcheren. The result was that all existing defences were repaired and strengthened, that the boom was thrown across the river at Lillo, and that a scheme for concentration of such troops as were at disposal was most carefully thought out. In the same month, however, a happy diversion by the British Navy distracted French attention to the Atlantic coast. On the 11th of April Lord Cochrane executed a brilliant attack with fire-ships upon the French fleet in Aix Roads, an exploit which, if properly seconded by his chief, Lord Gambier, would have resulted in the destruction of every French vessel. The alarm in France was great. Napoleon's

<sup>1</sup> Instructions to Keats, 24th July; to Capt. Owen and York, R.N., 21st July; to Admiral Otway, 16th July; to Lord Gardner, 10th July; to Hope and to Huntly, 25th July; to Coote, 17th July 1809.

1809. thoughts flew instantly to Brittany, and his officers trembled at the prospect of a serious raid upon any point between Flushing and Bordeaux. Admiral Decrès actually directed the fleet in the Scheldt to take refuge in the basin of Flushing—the very device which, for reasons that have already been explained, the British Admiralty would most have desired—though after a few hours of reflection he cancelled the order. The Generals of all the districts on the coast reported, quite truly, that they had not troops enough to make head against a really formidable disembarkation.

The panic had the effect of quickening the repair and extension of the defences on the Scheldt ; and when on the 17th of May a British squadron was sighted off Walcheren, General Clarke, the French Minister of War, was able to report that all the batteries were in order and fully manned, and that all the troops had received their instructions to meet any contingency. A month later than this Castlereagh sought the King's permission to allow the British preparations to go forward with all possible secrecy ; but there was nothing in them that was not known to the French commanders. The constant prying of British war-vessels into the Scheldt alone sufficed to keep the enemy on the alert ; and it so happened that at the end of June a strike in the dockyards of Antwerp, the garrison of which had been greatly weakened by drafts for the Danube, called the particular attention of the French authorities to the insecurity of that fortress.

By the beginning of July the French generals on the Scheldt were looking daily for the arrival of the  
July 21. British expedition. On the 21st of July some escaped prisoners from England gave the French War Office accurate intelligence of the numbers of Chatham's force, which, being communicated by semaphore to Flushing, did not elate the spirits of those in charge of the defences. Fresh information came in daily, always to the effect that the immediate objects of the armament were the islands of Flushing and Kadzand ; and, when

the appearance of the British fleet was signalled from 1809. Flushing to Paris, Clarke could only write to his master that after taking every possible measure of precaution for three months, he could think of nothing further to do.<sup>1</sup>

The actual garrison of Flushing at the end of July was something over four thousand men, regular troops, but chiefly foreign, provisional, and veteran battalions. The standing garrison of Kadzand was nine hundred and fifty effective men, a number which was raised just before Chatham's arrival to about double that strength. Rather more than two thousand regular troops could be added to this number from Ecloo and Ghent within thirty-six hours, and over two thousand more, besides a battalion of drilled workmen from Antwerp, within sixty hours. Besides these, there were six thousand well-trained National Guards, four-fifths of them at St. Omer, and the remainder at Boulogne, that is to say within three to four days' march of Flushing. Moreover, since two thousand of these National Guards were about to be relieved on the 1st of August, it chanced that that number of less-trained men was close at hand to take their place, and could likewise be directed to the Scheldt. Thus it may be said that the French had six thousand troops ready to meet Chatham at any moment, and could triple that number within three days.

The first complication which disturbed Strachan's plans occurred actually before the expedition sailed. On the 24th, news reached the Admiralty that Admiral July 24. Missiessy's fleet had dropped down the river to Flushing. Strachan, therefore, at first formed sanguine and, seemingly, rather wild hopes that he would encounter it in the open sea, and that Hope's division would reach South Beveland in time to cut off its retreat up the river.<sup>2</sup> Subsiding, however, shortly into soberness, and fearing that the French flotilla of gun-

<sup>1</sup> de Martel, pp. 226-281.

<sup>2</sup> Strachan to Chatham, 24th July 1809. *Chatham MSS.*



1809. boats might be detached towards Kadzand, the Admiral gave fresh instructions to Owen not to risk a landing in the face of formidable naval opposition, but to await a more favourable opportunity. He also changed the landing-place which he had appointed upon Walcheren from the south-west to the north-west coast, and  
July 26. despatched Keats's squadron on the 26th to reinforce Gardner's, which was already at the mouth of the Scheldt; though he could hardly hope that Missiessy would expose his fleet to the attack of an overwhelmingly superior force. These changes were serious in one respect only, namely, that they showed no adequate sense of the vital importance of the capture of Kadzand to the success of the expedition. Unfortunately, moreover, there was an additional obstacle in the way of the operation. Huntly was in trouble over his instructions. These bade him land two thousand men upon Kadzand, which phrase he interpreted to mean two thousand men in a single disembarkation. In that interpretation he was strengthened by words let fall by the Quartermaster-general, but, on referring the matter to Owen, he discovered that the Commodore had not boats enough to land more than seven hundred men at a time. Much disturbed, Huntly made a second effort to consult Chatham upon the point, while the squadrons were getting under way, but he was unsuccessful owing to the prevalence of a fog, and was obliged to proceed to his destination with this most important detail still unsettled.<sup>1</sup>

A fine breeze from the south-west carried Chatham and the Reserve across the North Sea in fourteen hours; and on the evening of the 28th they anchored in the Steen Deep, about nine miles north-west of Walcheren. Owen weighed at the same time with them, and on the same evening dropped anchor off Blankenberghe, a few miles to the westward of Kadzand, at the mouth of the Wielingen Channel. The wind freshened during the night, with the result that one gun-boat foundered

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, pp. 150-152, 161, 226.

and two more were dismasted; and Strachan was obliged to dispatch officers after dark to sound the channel to a safer anchorage, the Roompot. On the morning of the 29th Keats joined Strachan with his division; and this squadron, together with Hope's Reserve, was piloted by Sir Home Popham into the Roompot, where the vessels anchored early in the afternoon off Zieriksee. An hour or two later the Left Wing under Sir Eyre Coote arrived from the Downs in the Steen Deep; but the wind had now shifted to the westward and was blowing so hard that the anchorage was no longer safe, while the surf upon the west coast of Walcheren was so heavy as to prohibit any attempt at a landing. In the evening, however, Popham reported that there was space in the Roompot for the entire armament. Hope also, after reconnaissance of the shore of Schouwen, announced that the anchorage was out of range from thence; and begged permission, therefore, to land upon South Beveland and to take the batteries on the north bank of the West Scheldt in reverse, according to the original plan. Orders were sent to him accordingly on the same night, together with a sum of money for the purchase of transport; and at six o'clock on the following morning Strachan's fleet weighed anchor and proceeded into the Roompot. Within five hours the whole was lying safely off Breezand, just to westward of the northern mouth of the Veere Gat. July 29.

At eleven o'clock, signal was made for the troops to get into the boats and assemble for disembarkation, but the flood-tide, with a stiff south-westerly gale at its back, was running so furiously that boats could make no head against it. At four o'clock the tide slackened. By half-past five the boats of the first division, containing Browne's brigade<sup>1</sup> on the right and Rottenburg's

<sup>1</sup> The brigades had already been changed. Browne's brigade consisted of 2/23rd (400), 1/26th (651), 1/81st (644); Rottenburg's of 2 cos. 95th (200), 68th (775), 1/71st (934), 1/85th (970).

The numbers indicate rank and file only.

1809. on the left, and one light battery of artillery, the whole  
July 30. under command of Lord Paget, were formed in line ;  
and at six o'clock Chatham gave the order to pull for  
the shore. His instructions to Coote were that the  
left of the line should make for a beacon a mile to  
westward of the fort of Ten Haak, on the Veere Gat,  
so as to avoid its fire and, wheeling round, to take it in  
reverse. This was effected without difficulty. The  
fort fired a few useless shots at the ships which covered  
the landing, but this was the only resistance that was  
offered. The troops soon made their way through  
three lines of sand-dunes into the interior, capturing a  
few prisoners after a slight skirmish in a belt of wood ;  
while Colonel Pack, on the left, wheeled the Seventy-  
first round upon the rear of Ten Haak and found it  
abandoned, with four heavy guns spiked but three more  
undamaged. He took, however, a few prisoners and  
two more field-guns, which had apparently been brought  
forward to oppose the landing ; and, losing no time,  
he advanced with five companies of his regiment along  
the dyke by the Veere Gat to the fortified town of  
Veere. Chatham made Ten Haak his headquarters  
for the night.

Meanwhile, the boats had returned to the ships, and  
had landed Graham's division<sup>1</sup> and another light  
battery ; and all through the night the disembarkation  
continued. By ten o'clock another light battery and  
Picton's brigade<sup>2</sup> were on shore, and at half-past ten  
that officer was despatched with the Thirty-sixth to  
support Pack, who was meditating an attempt to carry  
Veere by surprise. Pack delivered his attack shortly  
afterwards, but was beaten back with a loss of five-  
and-thirty men ; and Popham then ordered the gun-

<sup>1</sup> Graham had taken over Cradock's division consisting of two  
brigades : Houston's, 3/1st (944), 1/32nd (565), 51st\* (512) ;  
1/82nd\* (969) ; Hay's, 1/5th (939), 2/35th (739), 2/14th  
(813).

\* These battalions did not land till late at night.

<sup>2</sup> Picton's brigade, 1/36th (594), 1/77th (545), 2/63rd (555),  
battalion of detachments (800).

boats to move up the Veere Gat as early as possible 1809. next day in order to bombard Veere; while at half-past three on the morning of the 31st, General July 31. Fraser advanced with the remainder of Picton's brigade to invest the town. So far, therefore, there seems to have been no lack of energy, though all circumstances had conspired to throw obstacles in the way of the expedition. Foul weather had delayed the disembarkation for full thirty-six hours, and had then diverted it to the quarter remotest from Flushing. From this point the principal lines of advance were blocked by the petty fort of Veere and by the town of Middelburg which, though not coming within the description of a fortress, was enclosed by bastioned lines and by a ditch. One contemporary critic,<sup>1</sup> so bitter and, indeed, scandalous as to invite little credit, insinuated to Castlereagh several weeks later that the army could have advanced and surprised Flushing on the night of the 30th. This contention is, I think, ridiculous. The troops had been on board ship for at least five days, much crowded and, since the 28th, probably suffering much from sea-sickness. It must have been fully seven o'clock before five thousand men were ashore; nor could these, after brushing aside the first opposition, have settled down into column of route in less than another hour. They would then have had a march of at least fifteen miles over country of which they knew nothing, without power to reconnoitre it from want of light, and without the means of reconnaissance from want of cavalry. The inhabitants, having horses, could easily have given timely warning to Flushing, itself a well-fortified town with a garrison of five thousand men. If Chatham had attempted any such foolhardy enterprise, he would rightly have been condemned for ignorance of his business.

About dawn of the 31st, deputies came in from Middelburg to negotiate for the surrender of the town,

<sup>1</sup> An anonymous paper in the *Londonderry MSS.*, described in the index of the MSS. as by Anderson, a captious amateur soldier so far as I can gather from his writings.

1809. which was duly agreed upon. By eight o'clock the investment of Veere was completed, and the gun-boats opened fire upon the fort, which answered with vigour, sinking two of them. The disembarkation of troops and artillery continued, and Chatham, having redistributed the battalions into a new organisation,<sup>1</sup> advanced at one o'clock in two columns. Of the first column the Right Wing marched to Meliskerke, throwing out patrols to Zoutelande; and the Centre accompanied by Chatham, to Grypskerke. The second column advanced by Serooskerke to St. Laurens, on the direct road to Middelburg. Great exertions were made to bring up heavy guns before Veere, but the bombardment of the gun-boats had already laid the town in ruins. Two hundred men, that is to say about half of the garrison, escaped by water in the night to Flushing, and the remainder, after a most gallant defence, surrendered at four o'clock on the morning of Aug. 1. the 1st of August.

On the same day the army continued its advance, the ground being perfectly flat but thickly wooded with stunted coppice. Graham, on the right, moved

<sup>1</sup> New organisation of the troops on Walcheren, 31st July 1809.

*Right Wing.* Maj.-Gen. Graham.

Artillery: five light 6-prs., one 5½ in. howitzer (1 battery).

Light Infantry: 2 cos. 68th L.I., 31 of 2/95th.

Infantry: Col. Day, 3/1st, 1/5th, 2/35th, 30 men of Staff Corps.

*Centre.* Lieut.-Gen. Lord Paget.

Artillery: five light 6-prs., one 5½ in. howitzer (1 battery).

Light Infantry: Brig.-Gen. Rottenburg, 8 cos. /68th, 85th, 120 of 2/95th.

Infantry: Brig.-Gen. Browne, 2/23rd, 1/26th, 1/32nd, 1/81st.

*Left Wing.* Lieut.-Gen. Mackenzie Fraser.

Artillery: five light 6 prs., one 5½ in. howitzer (1 battery).

Infantry: Maj.-Gen. Picton, 50 men 2/95th, 1/36th, 2/63rd, 1/71st, 77th, battalion of detachments, 20 men of Staff Corps.

*Reserve.*

Artillery: five 9-prs., one heavy 5½ in. howitzer (1 battery).

Infantry: Brig.-Gen. Houston, 2/14th, 51st, 1/82nd.

down the south-west coast of the island, by Zoutelande, 1809. Dishoek, Vygeneter, and Nolle, upon the western front of Flushing. There were seaward batteries at all of these places, which were either deserted or evacuated after a trifling resistance ; and Graham finally took up a position, with his right resting on the dyke at Nolle, and his left on the road to West Souburg.

Paget, meanwhile, moved by Koudekerke, where his advance parties met with some slight opposition, to West Souburg. In front of this village a small body of the enemy again made some resistance, but was soon dispersed with loss by Rottenburg's brigade and pursued to the very gates of Flushing by the Sixty-eighth and Eighty-fifth, who paid for their rashness with somewhat heavy loss. Four officers were wounded, and about ninety men killed and wounded in this affair ; but, on the other hand, the enemy suffered severely, losing two hundred prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Foolish gossip afterwards gave out that the two British regiments would, if supported, have carried Flushing there and then ; but a fortress with a sufficient garrison of regular troops, fully prepared against attack, is not to be taken in broad daylight by an assault of a few hundred men.

The second column of the Reserve simultaneously marched through Middelburg, and about two miles beyond it, at Abeele, found the enemy established with three guns behind a breast-work and abatis, and their sharp-shooters lining the enclosures upon each flank. The Light Infantry of the Reserve carried the village smartly, captured the three guns, and continued the advance towards East Souburg. Here again the French offered resistance, but General Houston, turning the village, forced them to retire with the loss of one gun and several wounded and prisoners, after which he took up his position a little in advance of East Souburg.

Fraser, likewise, having received the surrender of Veere, marched forward with the Left Wing of the first column by Middelburg to Ritthem, investing the fort

<sup>1</sup> *Chatham MSS.* Paget to Chatham, 1st Aug. 1809.

1809. of Rammekens on the Veere Gat, and completing the  
Aug. 1. investment of Flushing from the east. It remained, therefore, only to bring up heavy artillery to batter Flushing from the land, while the fleet should close its communications by water. The operations so far had cost the British nearly three hundred killed, wounded, and missing.<sup>1</sup>

On this same day, Hope's division, after being kept idle by squally weather throughout the 31st, was moved in small craft from the anchorage of Zieriksee up the East Scheldt, as if making for Bergen-op-Zoom. About noon, from two thousand to twenty-five hundred men<sup>2</sup> landed unopposed between Kattendyke and Wemeldinge on the north-eastern shore of South Beveland. The main body at once moved south-westward upon Goes, which surrendered; and Hope presently ascertained that the enemy was retiring upon Bat, collecting the peasantry as they went. He therefore marched eastward likewise, and took up a position for the night in two lines, extending Disney's brigade across the eastern tongue of the island from Kattendyke through Kapelle to Biezelinge, while Erskine's occupied Goes and the  
Aug. 2. ground to southward of it. On the following day Disney's brigade advanced towards Waarde, where there was a battery which commanded the usual anchorage of the French fleet. This work, however, was found to be deserted and its guns to be spiked; and a patrol, moving upon Bat in the afternoon, discovered that this important defence had likewise been abandoned, the ammunition removed, and the cannon rendered unserviceable. In the course of the day it was ascertained that the whole of the batteries on the Western Scheldt had been evacuated, and the guns spiked. Hope, therefore, echeloned his three brigades along the eastern tongue

<sup>1</sup> 1 officer, 45 men killed; 14 officers, 200 men wounded; 34 men missing. Nearly one-third of these casualties fell upon the 3/1st.

<sup>2</sup> The Light Infantry, 3/1st Guards, and part of the 92nd could not be landed this day. The landed portion of the 92nd occupied Goes.

of South Beveland from Goes to Bat. He had accomplished the work entrusted to him with unexpected ease ; and, indeed, the evacuation of Bat, which was not an open battery but a closed work requiring a regular siege, was anything but creditable to General Bruce, the Dutch commandant. Meanwhile, however, Missiessy had on the 31st begun his retreat up the river,<sup>1</sup> and Hope reported that he could see the French vessels safely lying about Antwerp.

The operations of Chatham and Hope were in reality but secondary, for the truly important point of attack was Kadzand. Commodore Owen with Huntly's division had anchored, it will be remembered, off Blankenberghe on the evening of the 28th. On the July 28. 29th the garrison of the island numbered, as we have July 29. seen, from eighteen to nineteen hundred men ; but on that day the wind was so strong, and the surf upon the shore was so high, that a landing was impossible ; and by the morning of the 30th the garrison had been strengthened by close upon a thousand men. On the evening of the 29th Owen represented to Strachan that he had not the means of disembarking as many men as Huntly desired, and begged that the boats of Lord Gardner's squadron might be sent to him. Strachan, however, who had originally ordered Gardner to hold his boats at Owen's disposal, had desired that Admiral at the same time to make a feint off the south-west coast of Walcheren from the eastern corner of the Steen Deep, so that Gardner was otherwise employed. At the dawn of the 30th, dispositions were July 30. again made for a landing, but the wind was still blowing too hard to admit the debarkation of the troops from the boats of the transports,<sup>2</sup> and the boats of the men-of-war would not carry more than seven hundred soldiers. Huntly, therefore, though most anxious to do

<sup>1</sup> de Martel, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Owen explained that the boats of the transports, being weakly manned, could make little progress towing flat-boats against a head wind, and that there was danger of their drifting under the enemy's batteries. *Enquiry*, p. 154.



1809. his duty, did not think himself justified in attempting to  
 July 30. land with so small a body of men, as he could not have  
 been reinforced in less than an hour and a half by a  
 second debarkation from the same boats.

July 31. The attack was therefore put off till the 31st ; but,  
 meanwhile, the garrison of Kadzand had risen in numbers  
 to four thousand men ; and Huntly, seeing that the  
 French were in considerable strength, declined to make  
 the attempt without the boats of Lord Gardner's  
 squadron, which would enable him to land a fairly strong  
 force at one and the same time. Gardner replied that  
 his instructions bade him remain where he was. In the  
 course of the day the numbers of the French on the  
 island increased to nearly six thousand men, including  
 three hundred cavalry, and before nightfall they had  
 risen to over six thousand. Huntly was not, of course,  
 aware of the exact numbers, but he had himself seen  
 two separate bodies of men, each eight hundred strong,  
 and he could not tell how many more might be con-  
 cealed behind the dykes. The whole project was  
 Aug. 2. therefore again postponed, and Strachan on the 2nd  
 of August wrote to Gardner : "Owen is right in not  
 attacking Kadzand. I never approved it, and Lord  
 Aug. 3. Chatham will be glad." On the 3rd of August Owen  
 received definite orders to make no further attempt  
 upon Kadzand, and to transport Huntly's division to  
 the Roompot. It was noticed that throughout these  
 days Huntly received no orders from Chatham, every  
 proceeding being under the direction of the Navy.<sup>1</sup>

From that moment—it would perhaps be more  
 accurate to say from the time when the first attack  
 on Kadzand was abandoned on the 30th—it may be  
 said that the failure of the whole enterprise was assured.  
 Unless the southern channel of the West Scheldt were  
 opened, the fleet, according to all reasonable calculation,  
 would have to wait until the fall of Flushing had cleared  
 the northern channel, and, meanwhile, the enemy would

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, pp. 150-166, 197-198, 200-205. *Dyott's Diary*, i.  
 279.

have abundant time to collect reinforcements for the 1809. defence of Antwerp. Napoleon himself attached so much importance to the possession of Kadzand that his first and constant thought was for its safety and defence.<sup>1</sup> Castlereagh so little understood its significance that he wrote to Chatham of the "great advantage" arising from the "fortunate failure" in occupying Kadzand, inasmuch as it liberated a larger force for operations further up the river.<sup>2</sup> It would be strange if Strachan and Chatham had thus deceived themselves, and, indeed, there is evidence that, in spite of their brave words, they realised the truth.<sup>3</sup> Strachan was fully aware that the French fleet could pass above Antwerp, and that, therefore, it was extremely improbable that he could ever overtake it; and it is for this reason likely that he was bent, at any rate, upon securing Walcheren. At the same time, considering that the capture of Kadzand was a definite part of the plan and important even for the subjection of Flushing, his orders to Gardner seem to have been far too vague and irresolute. But it is possible, again, that his intelligence was too narrow to grasp the full purport of his task, or to comprehend the multitude of complicated operations by which it was to be accomplished. His own immediate business was the capture of Walcheren; he could not attend heartily to any other; and he appears not to have possessed the ability or the greatness to act solely as director-in-chief, and to leave all details of execution to his subordinates.

Meanwhile, Chatham was engaged in bringing up his siege-artillery, which was landing at Veere. This work was found to be too heavy for the artillery-horses, the roads being so narrow and the ditches so numerous that accidents were frequent; and, accordingly, the whole of the guns were hauled over a deep soil, soaked with

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 15,619, 15,630, 15,643, 15,650.

<sup>2</sup> *Chatham MSS.* Castlereagh to Chatham, 21st Aug. 1809.

<sup>3</sup> "I agree with you in regretting that we cannot take Kadzand," Strachan to Chatham, 8th August. *Chatham MSS.*

1809. constant rains, by huge teams of men.<sup>1</sup> Chatham had early called upon Strachan to cut off communication between Kadzand and Flushing, and it was time, for
- Aug. 1. on the night of the 1st a strong reinforcement was passed into the beleaguered city from Kadzand. But, unfortunately, the weather made it impossible for ships to anchor in the channel between the two. They could only lie above it or below, and it was easy for the enemy to pass troops across from Kadzand, for the prevailing wind served their purpose exactly. Owen strove to the utmost at considerable risk to intercept
- Aug. 2. crossing boats, but with little success; and on the 2nd it was considered prudent to disembark Grosvenor's division which, together with Rosslyn's, had arrived on the 31st of July; though these troops were held ready for an immediate re-embarkation directly an advance should become practicable. Meanwhile, heavy
- Aug. 3. ordnance began to arrive from Veere, and on the 3rd the erection of batteries against Flushing was begun. Heavy guns were also brought up against Rammekens, which was battered into surrender before evening. The fall of this fortress opened the Veere Gat to the passage of small craft, and Chatham wrote to Strachan to suggest that the ships should be brought through that channel and its continuation, known as the Sloe, to the West Scheldt, thereby evading the guns of Kadzand and Flushing. Moreover, expecting that the British flotilla would now complete the investment of Flushing on the side of the water, he wrote to Hope that he should advance with every man that could be spared to the ultimate destination of the armament.
- Aug. 4. Nevertheless, in broad daylight of the following day, a reinforcement was passed from Kadzand to Flushing under the eyes of the British, consuming no more than seventeen minutes from bank to bank. The same thing
- Aug. 5, 6. happened on the following day, and on the day after, by which time the garrison of Flushing had been raised to between seven and eight thousand men. It was

<sup>1</sup> *Letters from Flushing*, pp. 163-164.

necessary again to reinforce the besieging army, and 1809. Von Alten's brigade of Rosslyn's division was accordingly landed at Veere on the 5th. On the 6th Chatham had a consultation with Strachan, urged the importance of a speedy advance up the Scheldt, and pressed the Admiral for answers to his questions as to the use of the Sloe channel, and the possibility of completing the naval blockade of Flushing. Strachan rightly declared the passage of the Sloe to be so difficult that it would cause much delay, and recommended that the whole of the troops not employed before Flushing should be landed on South Beveland, and marched overland to Bat, whither a certain number of transports and store-ships would follow them in a day or two. This, however, would have made matters worse instead of better, for the disembarkation and the re-embarkation of the horses would have taken much time, while the heavy guns could not by any possibility have been dragged through the deep roads of South Beveland. It is not, therefore, surprising that Chatham rejected the proposal. As to severing communications between Kadzand and Flushing, Strachan could give no answer; and Chatham wrote to Hope that, until this matter were settled, an advance would be impossible.<sup>1</sup> He arranged, however, with Strachan that Huntly's and Rosslyn's divisions, together with the transports of the cavalry and artillery, should drop down from the Roompot into the Sloe and there disembark upon South Beveland, so that the main river should be as little embarrassed as possible by transports.<sup>2</sup>

On the 7th once more French troops were able to cross over from Kadzand to Flushing, making over three thousand men thrown into the place within a week;<sup>3</sup> and on the afternoon of the same day the

<sup>1</sup> Chatham's letter to the King, 15th Oct. 1809; Strachan's answer thereto, 5th March 1810.

<sup>2</sup> *Chatham MSS.* Memo. by Chatham, 6th Aug. 1809.

<sup>3</sup> The numbers thrown into Flushing were: on 1st Aug. 660 men; 2nd, 1003; 4th, 320; 6th and 7th, 1160. *Total*, 3143—all of them French regular troops. de Martel, p. 403.

1809. garrison of the town made a sortie in two columns  
Aug. 7. upon Graham's division to westward of Flushing, but was driven back after three hours' fighting with  
Aug. 8. considerable loss.<sup>1</sup> On the morrow Chatham at last saw his desire fulfilled, for the wind permitted the British flotilla to extend across to Kadzand, and cut it off completely from Flushing. Popham, therefore, went up the West Scheldt to take soundings, and Huntly's and Rosslyn's divisions moved to their place  
Aug. 9. of disembarkation. On the 9th these two divisions landed in South Beveland, and, more important still, a British sloop moved up the West Scheldt, under the full fire of the batteries of Kadzand and Flushing, and returned under the same fire with little damage. On the other hand, Chatham was much embarrassed by the difficulty of obtaining correct information as to the enemy's movements or numbers, though all intelligence agreed that the forces of the enemy were rapidly increasing, and would soon amount to forty thousand men. Hope also reported that no supplies nor resources for an army were to be found in South Beveland.  
Aug. 10. Then followed a new complication. On the 10th the water in the ditches of Walcheren began to rise, and a French officer, who had been taken prisoner while trying to pass from Flushing to Kadzand, reported truly<sup>2</sup> that the sea-dykes had been cut by Napoleon's special order, though much against the will of General Monnet, the commandant. The water did not gain very rapidly, and the peasants, as was natural, were very willing to show how the inundation could be kept within bounds ; but, none the less, the troops suffered severely. They were for hours together up to their knees in water, and this hardship, combined with constant rain, told heavily upon them. Besides

<sup>1</sup> The British troops chiefly engaged were the Royal Scots, the 5th and 3 cos. of the 35th (Graham to Chatham, *Chatham MSS.*). The British casualties were : 14 men killed, 8 officers, 133 men wounded ; 1 officer, 4 men missing.

<sup>2</sup> See *Corres. de Napoléon*, 15,620.

the inevitable rheumatism and dysentery, miasmatic <sup>1809.</sup> fever broke out among them, and before the 12th of August it had become necessary to relieve the sentries twice instead of once, and to order the dead to be buried at night without torches or candles<sup>1</sup> lest the survivors should see them and despair.

The batteries, however, were very near completion, so that the inundation came too late to save Flushing. On the evening of the 11th a division of frigates passed <sup>Aug. 11.</sup> up the Scheldt under heavy fire from both Kadzand and Flushing, but gained the reach above the town safely with little damage or loss; and on the same day seven line-of-battle ships moved off Dishoek, so as to be ready to take part in the coming bombardment. Foul winds, prevented them from taking their right place; but none the less early in the afternoon of the 13th the besiegers' batteries opened fire from fifty-one <sup>Aug. 13.</sup> heavy pieces, supported by the gun-boats of the flotilla. The enemy replied vigorously, dismantling two guns, but inflicting little loss; and at sunset a lodgment was made by the Royal Scots at the western corner of the works. The fire slackened after dark, but the British continued to discharge carcasses and rockets into the town which, already twice kindled during the afternoon, burst finally at midnight into serious conflagration. Soon after daylight, the British batteries again opened, and within <sup>Aug. 14.</sup> three hours several of the enemy's guns, including the most formidable of the seaward batteries, were silenced. The seven line-of-battle ships then weighed anchor from Dishoek and fired upon the town, with such effect that after two o'clock the French hardly discharged a shot. At six a flag was sent in to summon the garrison to surrender; but, the answer being unsatisfactory, fire was reopened four hours later, and at eleven o'clock Colonel Pack attacked and carried one of the enemy's advanced works on the eastern side. Four hours later <sup>Aug. 15.</sup> Monnet sent in an offer to surrender, and on the 16th <sup>Aug. 16.</sup> British troops occupied the gates of the town.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters from Flushing*, pp. 117-120.

1809. The prisoners taken in Flushing numbered close upon  
 Aug. 16. fifty-eight hundred ; over eighteen hundred more had  
 been captured or had come over as deserters<sup>1</sup> since the  
 beginning of operations in Walcheren ; over one thousand  
 sick and wounded<sup>2</sup> had been transported to Kadzand  
 before the river had been closed ; and several men, of  
 course, had been killed. Altogether the operations must  
 have cost the French at least eight thousand people ; and  
 it is probable that they had upon Walcheren, from first to  
 last, more nearly nine thousand than eight thousand, not  
 reckoning the burghers of Flushing, who were compelled  
 to serve in the batteries. Monnet was not considered to  
 have made a creditable defence,<sup>3</sup> wherefore possibly he  
 may have sought to belittle the extent of his resources.  
 The casualties of the British Army from the 30th of  
 July to the 17th of August reached a total of seven  
 hundred and thirty-eight killed, wounded, and missing.

Meanwhile the preparations for the advance had  
 been pushed forward as far as possible. Hope, by  
 unspiking some of the guns captured at Bat, had  
 Aug. 11. repelled on the 11th an attack of the French flotilla ;  
 and Popham with the English flotilla had reached that

<sup>1</sup> The deserters were chiefly Prussians, but many also were Spaniards, the remains of Romana's army—*Letters from Flushing*, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Chatham (to Castlereagh, 16th Aug. 1809) says about a thousand ; but the French figures do not support this (de Martel, p. 403). The numbers of the garrison at the time of the British disembarkation were about 4638 men. There were thrown in from Kadzand 3143, making a total of 7781. The exact numbers given by Chatham's returns are : taken at the surrender of Flushing, 5803, of whom 618 wounded, prisoners and deserters taken previously, 1816. *Total*, 7619. This allows for only 162 killed during the whole of the operations, which seems to be a very small allowance. Our troops found more than one heap of dead loosely buried under six inches of soil. But the French returns are very mysterious, for actually two different returns were made by the garrison upon its surrender, one showing it to be 4379, and the other 5803. M. de Martel has evidently taken pains to arrive at the truth, but probably he understates the total strength of the troops upon Walcheren, which Chatham more correctly reckoned at 9000 men.

<sup>3</sup> de Martel, pp. 403, 412, 431.

point of the river on the same day. Huntly's division<sup>1809.</sup> and the infantry of Rosslyn's had landed on South Beveland on the 9th, and Rosslyn had taken over the command upon the island. The transports of the cavalry also, after long delay through foul winds, had made their way through the Sloe Channel to the West Scheldt; Grosvenor's and Graham's divisions received orders to embark at Rammekens, and to move likewise up the river; and Chatham announced that on the 20th he should shift his headquarters to Goes. He was delayed for twenty-four hours by a troublesome question, which shall be considered later, respecting his supply of specie, but on the 21st he duly set out, leaving General<sup>Aug. 21.</sup> Fraser to hold Walcheren with Picton's and Browne's brigades and the Seventy-first Regiment. Grosvenor's division and the cavalry had already started up the river on the 20th, and Graham followed them on the 21st. By that day Rosslyn's, Hope's, and Huntly's divisions, together with the Ninth Light Dragoons, the Second Hussars of the German Legion, and the waggon-train, were all cantoned towards the eastern end of South Beveland, while some of the cavalry-transports had reached Bat. But on the other side information came in of constant reinforcements still reaching Antwerp, of the flooding of large tracts of country from Liefkenshoek westward and from Bergen-op-Zoom northward, and finally of the whole of the French fleet having moved above Antwerp.

Now too came an entirely new complication, which finally decided the fate of the campaign. The miasmatic fever, which had already showed itself before Flushing, broke out in South Beveland. On the 20th there were nearly sixteen hundred men on the sick list, and the number increased alarmingly on the three following days. However, the divisions of Grosvenor and Graham continued their voyage up the river, and on the 23rd the former arrived at Bat. On that same<sup>Aug. 23.</sup> day Strachan, with five ships of the line, came up the river to Waarde, whither Chatham went to see him;



1809. but the Admiral had discovered that the enemy were constructing works higher up the Scheldt at Santvliet, Doel, and Lillo, and could give his attention to nothing but the means of thwarting them.<sup>1</sup> On the 24th Aug. Graham's division arrived at Bat; and Chatham, having transferred his headquarters to that post, sent his chief staff officers next day with Popham to reconnoitre the beach about Santvliet, which, on Sir Home's recommendation, had been selected for a landing-place. But sickness was increasing among the troops every hour; all information agreed that Antwerp was in a good state of defence, with all guns mounted and a strong garrison; and Chatham spent his day consulting with his generals and the naval officers, for he apprehended that the time was come to choose finally between an advance, wherein success was, so far as he could judge, highly precarious, and an immediate re-embarkation for England.

By this time Admiral and General were no longer on friendly terms. The first trouble had begun on the 31st of July, when Strachan was much annoyed over the employment of the gun-boats in bombarding Veere, upon which matter Chatham had, it appears, not consulted him.<sup>2</sup> Next, Chatham had thought Strachan negligent in the matters of blockading Flushing by water, of passing transports through the very difficult channel of the Sloe,<sup>3</sup> of sending a flotilla up the river to support Hope at Bat, and generally of failing to hasten his ships of war up the Scheldt. Strachan, on the other hand, conceived his colleague to be unpardonable for not marching the army through South Beveland to Bat, and was impatient because Chatham would not give authority to Rosslyn, as he himself had given authority to Keats, to advance with such troops as were already

<sup>1</sup> Strachan to Chatham, 23rd Aug., *Chatham MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Strachan to Chatham, 31st July 1809, *Chatham MSS.*

<sup>3</sup> Chatham had evidently formed his ideas of the Sloe from obsolete maps. In the seventeenth century the Sloe channel was perfectly open to the south, but in 1809 was obstructed by a bank which had been thrown up in the course of years from the south-western corner of South Beveland almost to Flushing.

on South Beveland on the 17th of August.<sup>1</sup> Each, of 1809. course, thought the other unreasonable, and it seems most likely that both were wrong. Foul weather, difficulties of navigation, and the time needed for arming transports and gun-boats accounted for the delay imputed by Chatham to Strachan ; while Strachan upon his side had not the slightest idea of the difficulties which presented themselves to Chatham, particularly in the matter of finance, as to which a word must now be said.

Upon the departure of the expedition the Commissary-general received strict orders from the Treasury to pay the inhabitants, for any articles supplied, no more than the market price as it stood before the disembarkation of the army. The Treasury further expected him to defray all expenses by bills upon London, and even to obtain specie by the same means. The Commissary soon found that these instructions were wholly inapplicable to the situation. Even if communication with Rotterdam, Amsterdam, or Hamburg had been open, the bills could not have been discounted except at a loss of fifteen or twenty per cent ; while, as circumstances actually stood, they were mere valueless paper. The Commissaries therefore pressed that allowance might be made for these drawbacks in the prices paid to the inhabitants. "We have not only drained them of cattle," they wrote, "but have often taken their cows, which were of greater value to them for the support of their families than can be made good by the highest price paid for beef. We have also taken all their horses, waggons, and drivers, without further remuneration than their rations, and this at harvest time." Chatham, in forwarding this letter, heartily supported the appeal, and begged also for a further supply of specie. The result was not satisfactory. Huskisson at the Treasury wrote a severe rebuke to the Commissary, declined to furnish any additional supply of specie, and stated simply that, if requisitions

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, Appendix, p. 89.

1809. were not satisfied upon the terms laid down in his instructions, they must be collected by force. The explanation of this attitude was privately explained to Chatham by Castlereagh. "When I inform you," he wrote, "that we do not possess the power of sending a single foreign coin from hence, and that in the last extremity, rather than disband the army, British guineas must be sent, you will not be surprised at receiving peremptory orders to enforce the system agreed on before you left London. . . . I need not suggest what would be the impression if *guineas* were going out to pay our army abroad. Besides, it could not be done without an Order in Council, and other proceedings which might embarrass."

This was the letter which detained Chatham for twenty-four hours at Middelburg when he was about to move his headquarters to Goes; and his answer showed that he was the son of his father. He declined flatly to carry Castlereagh's instructions into effect. To issue bills at par would, he wrote, be a most rigorous and unjust exaction of money; and the case was not one in which the extreme rights of war could be exercised. Walcheren had surrendered upon terms that private property should be respected; and a forced contribution would therefore be a breach of faith. Either allowance must be made for discount, or guineas must be sent to him. He was aware of the inconveniences of the latter course, but they would be nothing to that which would attend the dishonour of the British name. He ended his letter by defending his Commissary against the censure of the Treasury, bearing testimony to his efforts to keep the army supplied.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, as a Cabinet Minister, he knew the difficulties of Cabinets and the practice of evading them,

<sup>1</sup> W.O., i. 191, Chatham to Sec. of State, 11th Aug. (enclosing Com.-Gen. Robinson to Mil. Sec., 8th Aug.), 20th Aug.; *Castlereagh Corres.* vi. 304; Huskisson to Com.-Gen. Robinson, 17th Aug.; *Chatham MSS.*, Castlereagh to Chatham, 17th Aug. 1809.

and no doubt he foresaw that he would not gain his point without a struggle. In point of fact, Castlereagh merely sent him the opinion of the King's Advocate in support of the Treasury's contention, as if an academic pronouncement could be of the slightest value in such a case ; though he softened the blow by a remittance of £40,000 in dollars.<sup>1</sup> But this reply did not arrive until September, and Chatham had to take account of things as they stood. He had been sent out on the hypothesis that Antwerp was insecurely fortified and weakly held ; and it was now ascertained that the fortifications were strong and in good order, and that the garrison was powerful. The fleet had already retired beyond Antwerp, and the city itself could not be taken nor its arsenals destroyed except after a regular siege. For this there were not sufficient heavy guns without having resort to those of the fleet.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, even if guns had been forthcoming, it was more than doubtful whether, in the most favourable circumstances, Chatham had now troops enough for such an operation, since his men were dropping down hourly both in Walcheren and in South Beveland under the stroke of miasmatic fever. Again, it was certain that, besides Antwerp on his front, Bergen-op-Zoom upon his left flank had been strongly reinforced, which made his position, whether for advance or retreat, most perilous. The enemy were assembling also in considerable numbers in Kadzand, so that Flushing needed as vigilant watching as a besieged city. If Chatham pushed farther up the river, Flushing, with half of its garrison in hospital, might fall, particularly if the inhabitants, enraged by requisitions, should turn against the British ; and then his retreat would be cut off. The hostility of the population also would immensely enhance the danger of a retirement through South Beveland. As to his generals, Erskine and Lord Huntly, who had known Antwerp in 1793, had never concealed their opinion as to the impracticability of taking it without a regular siege ;

<sup>1</sup> *Chatham MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> *Enquiry*, p. 297.

1809. while Hope, never sanguine of success, had been convinced after a few days in South Beveland that the objects of the expedition were unattainable. Sir Robert Aug. 26. Brownrigg submitted a statement to the generals, setting forth that by all intelligence the enemy had in Breda, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Antwerp, thirty-three thousand men, besides two or three thousand more on the left bank of the Scheldt. He reckoned that Chatham, after deducting detachments to hold Walcheren and South Beveland, to observe Bergen-op-Zoom, to reduce Liefkenshoek, and occupy the left bank of the Scheldt, would have but ten thousand men left for the attack on Antwerp; and the generals therefore unanimously pronounced further operations to be unprofitable.

Strachan, however, while admitting that only the capture of Antwerp could fulfil the purpose for which the armament had been despatched, was eager for the army to attack Lillo and Liefkenshoek, since the command of those fortresses might "open some further field of enterprise." The fact was that some French ships of the line had dropped down again below Antwerp, and that he was longing to make an attempt against them. Chatham rejoined very truly that the reduction of Lillo and Liefkenshoek would not only be difficult in itself, but would involve the very dangerous necessity of dividing the army; while, even if the operations were successful, they would in no way further the object of the expedition. As a matter of fact neither of these little strongholds could have been taken without a regular siege, the preparations for which would have consumed a week, nor could their communications with Antwerp have been cut off owing to the inundation. Strachan then seems to have lost his head, or, being unwell at the moment, to have given way to an impulsive haste which was habitual to him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "He was intemperate at times on board ship and headstrong in his zeal." *Biographical Notes of Admiral Sir William Hotham, G.C.B.*; a very interesting MS. most kindly lent to me by his great-nephew, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Charles Hotham. The

He wrote a wild letter to Chatham, stating, quite un- 1809.  
truly, that the army had only a week's provisions and  
the navy only four days' left, and that the General  
ought to report this to England at once ; hinting also  
that he should in his own letter mention this dearth of  
victuals as Chatham's sole reason for abandoning the  
enterprise. He added, however, that, looking to the  
state of the supplies, the increase of sickness, and the  
growing power of the enemy, little success was to be  
expected from any further operation. Altogether the  
letter was not such as one gentleman should have  
written to another. To make matters worse, though  
Chatham, of course, was unaware of this last fact,  
Strachan on the same day wrote to the Admiralty a  
despatch which, by his own subsequent confession, con-  
tained unjust reflections upon the military Commander-  
in-Chief and his fellow-generals. This incident does  
not throw a very pleasant light upon the character of  
Chatham's naval colleague.<sup>1</sup>

Chatham, however, had other things to think about  
than the Admiral's vagaries. On the 27th the sick in Aug. 27.  
South Beveland numbered over thirty-four hundred ;  
on the 28th they numbered four thousand, including Aug. 28.  
several officers ; and on the latter day the General began  
his arrangements for evacuating South Beveland and  
sending the cavalry to England. Strachan was anxious  
to detain the troops in South Beveland for ten days or  
a fortnight, while he executed his instructions to destroy  
the navigation of the river ; but Chatham firmly declined,  
pointing out that there were no hostile troops on the  
island, and that it lay with Strachan himself to prevent  
the French from landing heavy cannon.<sup>2</sup> On the 29th Aug. 29.

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context does not lead me to suppose that the word intemperate has  
any reference to the habit of drinking, otherwise I should have con-  
jectured that Strachan was not sober when he wrote this letter.

<sup>1</sup> Strachan to Sec. Admiralty, 26th Aug. (enclosing Chatham's  
answer), 27th Aug. ; to Chatham (printed in the *Enquiry*, pp. 247-  
248), 27th Aug. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> *Chatham MSS.*, Chatham to Strachan, 29th Aug., 6th Sept.  
1809.

1809. the captured works were demolished and the captured guns embarked ; and it was arranged that the garrison of Walcheren should consist of the brigades of Picton, Browne, Dyott, Acland, Hay, Rottenburg, and Alten, with detachments of cavalry, artillery, and engineers, the whole amounting nominally to close upon nineteen thousand rank and file. These troops commenced their march to the island, taking their sick with them in
- Sept. 1. waggons ; and the embarkation began on the 1st of September among endless difficulties, for the invalids increased so rapidly as to overflow the hospital ships and demand accommodation in other vessels. The number of sick on the 1st of September was over four
- Sept. 3. thousand ; by the 3rd it had risen to eight thousand ; but in spite of the enormous difficulties thus brought
- Sept. 5. about, South Beveland was finally evacuated on the 5th of September. In Walcheren the fever was raging with equal virulence. In the Sixth Regiment the invalids numbered over five hundred, while the Twenty-third could not furnish a man for duty.
- Sept. 7. On the 7th of September the troops bound for England sailed away, when it was reckoned that the sick of the whole army, including those already sent home, numbered nearly eleven thousand. Castlereagh had already done what he could, though with indifferent success, to furnish additional doctors, medical stores, and hospital-ships ; but few of the practitioners in London were willing to go to Holland. He strove also to make arrangements for the invalids that were arriving in England ; but the enormous number of them made it necessary to improvise hospital tents and other temporary accommodation in the coastal towns. Leith's and Houston's brigades alone landed nearly eleven hundred invalids,<sup>1</sup> and the proportion was not smaller in other battalions. But this was nothing to the appalling state of things that prevailed in Walcheren itself. In the week ending the 10th of September there
- <sup>1</sup> 3658 fit for duty, 1078 sick. Mil. Sec. to Francis Moore, 9th Sept. 1809.

were, out of nearly eighteen thousand non-commissioned 1809. officers and men, close upon seven thousand in hospital; by the 17th the number of sick had risen to over eight thousand;<sup>1</sup> by the 24th to eight thousand seven hundred; and by the 1st of October to over nine thousand; and this though the deaths within four weeks amounted to over one thousand. The condition of these poor invalids was deplorable. Flushing had been so much damaged by the bombardment that there was hardly a roof that kept out the cold and rain, and owing to the inundation the ground-floors were uninhabitable. In Middelburg the buildings were sound, but so much overcrowded that in many cases the sick were lying two in a bed with quite insufficient ventilation; while the convalescents, from want of a separate hospital, relapsed again into illness.<sup>2</sup> The medical staff, wholly inadequate and terribly overworked, was itself diminished by disease and death. The distress of Sir Eyre Coote, who had been left in command at Walcheren, was beyond description; and his military position, owing to the prostration of half of his garrison, became most dangerous. "Something must be done," he wrote to Chatham on the 29th of September, "or the British nation will lose the British army—far more valuable than the island of Walcheren."<sup>3</sup>

Some relief was obtained by shipping invalids to England; and at the beginning of October a very efficient and energetic medical officer, Dr. McGrigor, the Inspector of Hospitals, was sent across to Walcheren. He endeavoured to hire hospital-orderlies from among the native Dutch, and to obtain men from the Veteran Battalions at home as attendants; but the number of the sick still increased, rising, in spite of deaths and embarkations, to nine thousand five hundred on the 6th Oct. 6.

<sup>1</sup> Dyott's *Diary* states the number of sick on the 17th at 8895, on the 24th at 8526, the deaths in the previous week having been 287 (i. 287).

<sup>2</sup> Dyott speaks of 15 men, 12 of them sick, in a room barely 12 feet square (i. 288).

<sup>3</sup> *Chatham MSS.*



1809. of October. In despair the Government ordered the Physician-general of the Army, Sir Lucas Pepys, to proceed to Walcheren. He declined, upon the ground that he knew nothing of the diseases of the soldier ; and neither of his two colleagues volunteered to take his place. This was very discreditable ; but two other medical officers of high station went out in their stead, and they had already been preceded by Dr. Gilbert Blane, a London physician of great eminence. Yet in spite of the removal of four thousand living patients to England and of many hundreds of dead to their graves, the number of the sick increased by three hundred in the third week of October, and the deaths continued to maintain the rate of twenty to thirty a day. The plague was greater than could be stayed by doctors.

- Oct. 27. On the 27th of October Coote handed over the command at Walcheren to General Don, whose first act was to request transport to remove nearly six thousand invalids to England, as the only chance of saving their lives.
- Oct. 30. On the 30th he reported that the past week had produced nearly thirteen hundred fresh cases, though the
- Nov. 12. deaths had fallen to ninety-nine. On the 12th of November the returns of the garrison showed just under forty-five hundred men nominally fit for duty, and forty-nine hundred sick ; and there had for some time past been intelligence of French preparations to recapture Walcheren.<sup>1</sup>

- As early as the 19th of September Castlereagh had urged the importance of an early decision whether the island should or should not be retained ; but owing to confusion in the Ministry, due to reasons which shall shortly be explained, such a decision was for some time
- Oct. 24. impossible. It seems, however, that by the 24th of October the Government had nearly made up its mind to the evacuation, and only hesitated owing to uncertainty whether Austria had or had not concluded a
- Nov. 4. definite peace with France. On the 4th of November

<sup>1</sup> Don to Sec. of State, 30th Oct., 17th Nov., Return of 12th Nov. 1809 (none of them printed in *Parliamentary Papers*).

Lord Liverpool quietly ordered Don to destroy the 1809. naval defences of Walcheren as far as possible, and to embark the garrison. A brigade was sent over to reinforce the troops during the work of destruction, which took the best part of a fortnight; and throughout this time the French pushed forward their preparations for an attack on the island with the greatest vigour. On the 9th of December Don embarked the last of his Dec. 9. men; but even so the long agony of the expedition was not ended. The sick continued to die rapidly and to recover slowly. The number of those killed in action during the campaign was one hundred and six; the number which died of disease up to the 1st of February 1810 was four thousand. Of about thirty-five thousand officers and men who survived, there were at the date of the final evacuation of Walcheren over eleven thousand five hundred in hospital.<sup>1</sup>

For the most distressing feature in this expedition, namely, the great losses from fever, it does not appear

<sup>1</sup> Return of 1st Feb. 1810, in *Parl. Papers*, p. 63. Return showing the effective strength of the army which embarked for service in the Scheldt in the month of July 1809; the casualties which occurred; the number of officers and men who returned to England; and the number reported sick according to the latest returns (with the exception of the 59th Regiment, from which corps a proper return has not yet been received).

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
1st Feb. 1810.

	Officers.	N.C.O. and Men.
Embarked for service . . . . .	1738	37,481
	Officers.	R. and F.
Killed . . . . .	7	99
Died on service . . . . .	40	2041
Died since sent home . . . . .	20	1859
Deserted . . . . .	—	84
Discharged . . . . .	—	25
Total officers and men who returned, who are now borne on the strength of their respective corps . . . . .	1671	33,373
Of which number are reported sick . . . . .	217	11,296
(Signed)	HARRY CALVERT, Adjutant-General.	

1809. to me that any man or group of men could be held responsible. Walcheren and the neighbouring country, flat plains reclaimed from the sea and intersected with dykes of stagnant water, were known to be unhealthy ; and the medical authorities declared that, if they had been informed of the destination of the armament, they could and would have taken extraordinary precautions to meet this particular danger. But no one could have foreseen such an appalling plague as fell upon the troops, and no multiplication of doctors nor accumulation of quinine could have sufficed to cope with it. It was noticed that the British suffered far more than the foreign troops, though no one could account for this peculiarity. One of the physicians, however, ascribed the prevalence of fever to four principal causes. In the first place, the men were very frequently housed in damp and ill-ventilated buildings to save the inhabitants from quartering them ; secondly, the provisions given to them consisted of exceedingly salt meat and hard and indigestible biscuit ; thirdly, to allay the thirst and discomfort caused by this diet, the soldiers resorted to spirits ; and, lastly, to relieve the increased thirst induced by the spirits, they filled themselves with fruit, which was very abundant, and tank-water. It may be added that the troops were insufficiently clad and unprovided with flannel under-clothing or blankets. The maladies from which they suffered were, apparently, of two kinds : malarial fever, often degenerating (according to the language of the time) into typhus ; and another fever, which was from the first of the nature of typhus, and was therefore called typhoid. This latter seems to have become epidemic ; and the sufferers, as in the case of cholera or yellow fever, abandoned themselves to despair. It must, however, be said that there were no precedents, as in the case of the West Indies, to lead Ministers to expect such a visitation as fell upon the army in Walcheren.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report of Asst.-Surgeon Renny, *Castlereagh Desp.* vi. 337 ; *Letters from Flushing*, pp. 203-204, 232-234.

As to the responsibility for the failure of the expedition on the military side, it is less difficult to express an opinion. There can be little doubt, I think, that the task set to Army and Navy was impossible. In the first place, the despatch of the force was delayed for too long. Popham had predicted that the elements would prove to be its worst enemy, and so indeed they were. From the moment when the fleet was driven into the Roompot, that is to say, into the East Scheldt instead of the West Scheldt, considerable delay became inevitable; and, as already remarked, from the moment when the attack upon Kadzand became impossible on the 29th of July, the failure of the attempt upon Antwerp was assured. There remains the question whether, if the weather had been favourable, the expedition would have stood any chance of success.

The plan, it will be remembered, was that Sir Eyre Coote with twelve thousand men should look to Walcheren and the siege of Flushing, while Huntly's division captured Kadzand and destroyed the batteries, and Hope's division cleared the shore of South Beveland as far as Bat. This done, the troops, with the exception of Coote's, were to re-embark, move up the river to Santvliet, land there, and march upon Antwerp. Hope, by unexpected good fortune, was in possession of Bat by the evening of the 2nd of August; and an earlier date could hardly have been counted on by the most sanguine. But say that Hope could have accomplished his work by the evening of the 31st. Say also that Huntly had captured Kadzand on the 29th and opened the southern channel to the fleet. Though the Navy possessed excellent French charts, it would have been necessary to sound and buoy the passage up the river, to arm the gun-boats and small craft, and to carry three to four hundred ships up with the flood tide (for a light westerly wind would have been of no avail against the ebb), over sixty or seventy miles of difficult and tortuous navigation to Santvliet. The earliest day upon which the most hopeful

1809. calculators reckoned upon reaching Santvliet was the 3rd of August.<sup>1</sup> Arrived there, about twenty-five thousand men, and from three to four thousand horses would have had to be disembarked, together with their stores and artillery, heavy and light; it would also have been necessary to form depots, and to throw up entrenchments for their defence. But say that the army had marched from Santvliet on the 5th, with intent to cover the fifteen miles of sandy road to Antwerp in one day; what force would it have found to oppose it? On the 2nd of August there were between Lillo and Antwerp no more than twelve hundred men, infantry, artillery, workmen, police, and the like, besides seven thousand on the fleet and flotilla, six thousand of whom could have been landed to defend Antwerp against a surprise attack. On the 3rd arrived eight hundred cavalry and infantry from Maestricht, and twenty-three hundred regular infantry and ship's artificers, the last-named all drilled and trained men. Besides these, the four thousand National Guards and two thousand regular troops which left Ghent for Kadzand on the 2nd, would, in our hypothetical case, have moved direct upon Antwerp, and would have reached it by the morning of the 5th. Further, there were four to five thousand Dutch troops placed between Antwerp and Bergen-op-Zoom, with orders to co-operate in the defence of the former place. Lastly, on the 5th of August three hundred and fifty cavalry marched into Antwerp, and on the 6th arrived twenty-three hundred regular troops, infantry and dismounted cavalry. If, therefore, Chatham had appeared before the walls of the fortress on the 5th, he would have found, on a moderate estimate, seventeen to eighteen thousand men ready to defend it. If he had been delayed for two days—and the Government should have allowed at least so much margin for unforeseen difficulties—he would have found the enemy strengthened by over twenty-five hundred regular

<sup>1</sup> *Enquiry*, Evidence of Sir Robert Brownrigg.

troops, who marched into Antwerp on the 5th and 6th. 1809. Further, he must have detached men to capture or engage Lillo and Liefkenshoek, in order to allow the fleet to pass, more men to observe the garrison of Bergen-op-Zoom, and yet more to hold South Beveland and his depots at Santvliet, so that he could hardly have led more than eighteen or nineteen thousand soldiers to Antwerp. With such a force he could not have hoped to carry the city by assault; and, if he had been obliged to bring up his heavy guns, he would have needed the best part of a week more. But by the 11th five thousand additional regular troops had arrived at Antwerp, making even a siege too dangerous an operation to be practicable.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the British force was sent upon an errand in which success was at best very precarious, and practically impossible. General Robert Craufurd devoted a long speech in the House of Commons to prove the contention that the weather was solely responsible for the failure of the expedition; and without doubt there was some truth in this. The weather was most unfavourable, and was unusually stormy for the time of year; but it may be questioned whether an enterprise which could be wrecked, as this one was, by two consecutive windy days at the outset, should have been undertaken upon so great a scale.

As to the manner in which the commanders executed their duties it is difficult to speak, the operations being in their nature essentially naval, and full of such difficulties of seamanship, pilotage, and navigation as only a highly trained seaman can appreciate. But I cannot see that Chatham, in spite of his notorious indolence, showed inactivity or want of judgment; nor do I believe that any man in his place would have acted otherwise than he did. The instant that Bat was secured he urged upon Strachan the imperative need for an immediate advance; and it was no fault of Chatham's that the Admiral should have answered him

<sup>1</sup> Martel, pp. 355-356.

1809. with a foolish military proposal of his own. Chatham showed also admirable temper in dealing with Strachan's bad manners, and a praiseworthy firmness in his decision to retreat. Strachan himself was evidently overweighted by his charge; but his difficulties and trials, especially on account of weather, were very great, and he must not be harshly judged. It may be objected that, as results proved, he might have run the gauntlet of the batteries of Flushing and Kadzand with little danger; but this is wisdom after the event, and no Admiral can be condemned for refusing to take such a risk, not only for his ships' companies, but for the thousands of troops that were crowded on board his vessels. A calmer and abler man might possibly have accomplished more with rather less friction; but the task set to him was beyond the power of any mortal; and a few days saved would have made no difference to the ultimate result. The expedition needed extraordinarily good luck to attain success; and it was dogged not merely by misfortune, but by cruel, and it may be said undeserved, adversity.

For the rest it must be added that the diversion in the Scheldt threw Paris into a panic, and that, if successful, it would have gone near to overthrow Napoleon's Empire. Fouché, shrewdest of observers, called out the whole of the National Guard and appointed officers hostile to the Emperor, in order to be master of the situation if the crash should come. Napoleon, after Chatham had withdrawn, declared that Walcheren was too small a matter to call for his own presence, and that he should leave its recapture to Bessières. None the less, early in 1810 he made further provision for the defence of the Scheldt; and it is probably true to say that the expedition gave him some of the most anxious and unpleasant moments of his life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 159,17, 159,34, 159,67, 159,94, 163,17, 163,35, 164,33, 164,60-164,64.

## CHAPTER XXVII

OUR last survey of the Peninsula closed with the disappearance of the British army from the scene of action, leaving the forces of Napoleon free to deal as they would with the broken hosts of Spain. After the disaster of Zornosa the Army of the Left had rallied and, reinforced by Romana, retired, as we have seen, into Galicia in utter demoralisation, having lost its main support against Soult through the re-embarkation of the British. The Army of the Centre, after the defeats of Gamonal, Tudela, and Somosierra, had broken up into three bodies, of which the Aragonese under Palafox had withdrawn to Zaragoza, the Andalusians under La Peña to Cuenca, and the Estremadurans under Galluzzo to the south bank of the Tagus opposite Almaraz. The dislocation of the French Army for the pursuit of Moore had paralysed its offensive powers for the time, though not wholly, for Napoleon before Christmas could still spare Lefebvre's corps and Lasalle's division of cavalry to make an end of Galluzzo, and that of Lannes to move against Zaragoza. Lastly, he had in the autumn of 1808 collected reinforcements for his army in Catalonia. The operations of all these forces must be briefly sketched; and it will be convenient first to deal with those in Catalonia.

It will be remembered that in August 1808 Reille and Duhesme, after a futile attempt to capture Gerona by siege, had retired, the one northward to Figueras, the other southward to Barcelona, both in the extreme of destitution and discomfiture. The Spaniards, on the



1808. other hand, were stronger than ever. By the energy of the provincial junta twenty thousand *migueletes* were organised and ready for the field ; while, thanks to the transfer of the Balearic garrisons to the mainland, there were already twelve thousand regular troops in the province, and twenty thousand more were on their way from Granada, Aragon, and Valencia. With the French force thus divided and outnumbered, there was a great opportunity for a stroke upon one or the other of its branches. Reille at Figueras was comparatively safe from more than petty annoyance from irregular bands, for his communication with Perpignan was open. Not so fortunate was Duhesme. He was beleaguered by only five thousand *migueletes* and two to three thousand regular troops under General Caldagues ; but he was wholly isolated, and his supplies were running short. He had no difficulty in forcing his way through the weak cordon of Caldagues to collect victuals in the neighbouring villages ; but his columns could never return without a fight, in which they were often roughly handled, and could only escape by abandoning the food which they had collected. No sooner were they again within the lines than the *migueletes* likewise took up their former positions, harassing the French unceasingly ; and in fact Duhesme realised that, unless relieved, he could not hold his own beyond the end of December.

A concentration of the Spanish regular troops, therefore, against Figueras might have forced Reille back into France, completing the isolation of Duhesme ; or the like movement against Barcelona might have turned the loose blockade into a siege. But unfortunately the Captain-General of the province, the Marquis del Palacio, was both irresolute and slow. Through the whole of September he lay motionless at Tarragona, until at last, upon the complaint of the local junta, he was superseded by General Vives. This, however, was no change for the better, for Vives was just such another as his predecessor. On taking over the command at the end of October he found himself

at the head of twenty thousand troops ; and, having arranged with secret friends in Barcelona that they should raise the populace within the walls, while he assaulted the place from without, he moved before the city with nearly thirteen thousand men. After a fortnight of feeble skirmishes he was joined by a first reinforcement of Granadans, when by a general attack upon Duhesme's advanced posts he drove every Frenchman within the city. But here his efforts ended, and for all practical purposes he had accomplished nothing. 1808.  
Nov. 26.

Meanwhile, early in August Napoleon had called up from Italy twenty-three battalions—ten of them French under General Souham, and thirteen Italian under General Pino, from the army of Italy—and had placed at their head one of the very ablest of his commanders, Gouvion St. Cyr. They took long to reach their base at Perpignan, and it was not until the beginning of November that St. Cyr was able to move with a field-army of close upon twenty-four thousand men. His task was no easy one. His way to Barcelona was barred by the fortress of Gerona, but he dared not wait to capture it by siege, lest Duhesme should in the meanwhile be starved ; and, since the main road was actually swept by the guns of Gerona, he decided to take with him no heavy guns or baggage, but only such light artillery and such few stores as could be carried on pack-mules, and thus to creep past the city along by-ways. But first he came to the conclusion that he must capture the petty fort of Rosas on the coast about ten miles from Figueras, lest the Spaniards, with the aid of the British, should land in the harbour, sever his communications, and operate against his flank and rear. When Rosas was in his power, and Gerona had been safely passed, he had still to force his way through a most difficult country to Barcelona. The road by the coast had been so much damaged both by the *somatènes* and the British cruisers that St. Cyr judged it to be impracticable ; and the remaining road by Hostalrich

1808. offered many positions which, if held by steady and well-disciplined troops, were to all intent impregnable.

Nov. 5. On the 5th of November St. Cyr crossed the Pyrenees, and by the 7th had invested Rosas. The place, though important, was of trifling extent and in bad repair, and was held by three thousand men, one-third of whom only were regular troops, Irish, Swiss, and Spanish, and the remainder *migueletes*, with a British line-of-battle ship and two bomb-vessels to help them in the harbour. After a fruitless attempt to carry the fort by escalade, Reille, who was conducting the siege, decided to send for his heavy artillery, and, upon its arrival, began the construction of his batteries. But

Nov. 16. ten days later arrived Captain, Lord Cochrane of the *Impérieuse*, who landed his own seamen and marines to hold the tower, which was the most important of the fortifications, and became the soul of the defence. By his energy and resource<sup>1</sup> the French army was held

Dec. 4. before this petty stronghold until the 4th of December, when the Governor surrendered and Cochrane drew his men off with little loss to the shore, and thence to their ship. Had there been at this time in Sicily a commander of less egoism and greater enterprise than Sir John Stuart, the landing of five or six thousand British at Tarragona during this siege might well have wrecked St. Cyr's campaign.

Rosas having been taken, the French General was at liberty to proceed to the relief of Barcelona; wherefore, leaving five thousand men with Reille to watch Gerona and keep open his communications, he led some sixteen thousand men on their perilous march to the south. Meanwhile Vives had done nothing except to push up the Marquis de Lazan's division of four thousand Aragonese to Gerona, increasing the force there to eight thousand men, a number far too small to do anything towards the relief of Rosas. Desirous to

<sup>1</sup> I refer the reader for all details to the fascinating narrative of Cochrane himself in the *Autobiography of a Seaman*, and to that of Marryat in *Frank Mildmay*.

foster in Vives the delusion that the siege of Gerona 1808. was the French object, St. Cyr manœuvred for a day, Dec. 10. and on the 11th of December sent his artillery back to Figueras and turned eastward into the mountains. At La Bisbal he gave his men four days' biscuit, warning them that they would have no more till they reached Barcelona; and with this scanty provision and a bare sixty rounds of ammunition for each musket, he marched south-westward upon Vidreras. A paltry force of four battalions, which had been detached by Vives, tried to hold a defile against him, but was easily brushed aside; and on the 13th at Vidreras he struck Dec. 13. the main road from Gerona to Malgrat. On the 12th Vives, having full information of St. Cyr's movements, sent five thousand men under General Reding northward from Barcelona to Granollers, and three thousand more under General Milans to watch the road on the coast; but, while thus frittering away his army, he himself remained with sixteen thousand men useless before Barcelona. However, Lazan had by this time moved out from Gerona in pursuit of the French; whereupon St. Cyr, seeing camp-fires both to north and south of him, turned again into the mountains by a path which was known only by report, and on the afternoon of the 15th brought his entire force to San Celoni on Dec. 15. the main road between Barcelona and Gerona. Milans, finding the road by the coast clear, had taken post here, but was easily driven off; and despite of the weariness of his troops St. Cyr pushed on that same evening through the pass of the Trentapassos, lest before morning that very formidable position should be held by the enemy. He had thus accomplished the worst part of his march practically without opposition.

Vives now, instead of advancing with his whole force, left Caldagues with twelve thousand men before Barcelona, although the blockade might perfectly well have been entrusted to the *migueletes*; and on the night of the 15th led four thousand only to join Reding at Cardadeu, a little to south of San Celoni, where, arriving

1808. early in the morning, he took up a position hastily with  
Dec. 16. his nine thousand men. St. Cyr, having left three battalions at the Trentapassos to hold Lazan in check, had but thirteen thousand men; and being unable, owing to woods and broken ground, to make out the strength of his enemy, he formed his infantry into a single column, ordering them to pierce their way through the Spaniards with the bayonet. His design was nearly wrecked by General Pino, who, seeing his men fall fast, deployed his division and was repulsed; but St. Cyr set matters right by launching Souham's division forward in one mass, which broke through the right wing of Vives and soon dispersed his army. The French captured fifteen hundred men and five out of seven guns; about a thousand Spaniards were killed; many hundreds scattered to their homes, and the rest drifted back to Barcelona. Milans, who was within five miles, and Lazan, who was within four miles of the battle-field, never came near it till all was over. Caldagues, after repulsing a sortie of Duhesme, broke up from before Barcelona, and retired westward to Molins de  
Dec. 17. Rey; and on the 17th St. Cyr triumphantly entered Barcelona with ammunition insufficient even for a small action and without a crumb of provisions. The fight at Cardadeu had cost him nearly seven hundred men, a very small price to pay for a movement so hazardous that only success could excuse it. Once again, had Stuart's six thousand men been landed at Tarragona, and had they repelled, as they probably would have repelled, the attack of Souham, St. Cyr must have been lost. But he dared everything for a great object; he conducted his march with admirable audacity, skill, and perseverance, and, though his opponents played directly into his hands, he thoroughly deserved his reward.

Reding now joined Caldagues, and took up a line of entrenchments in rear of the Llobregat which had been thrown up to contain Duhesme. The position was too extensive for a force reduced to fourteen thousand men, and both Reding and Caldagues were for falling

back. Vives, however, when consulted, sent an evasive 1808. reply; and Reding, smarting under his first defeat, resolved to stand his ground. On the morning of the 21st of December St. Cyr attacked him, and routed him Dec. 21. with the loss of twenty-five guns and twelve hundred prisoners, among whom was Caldagues, the best of the Spanish officers. The Spaniards escaped without very serious losses; but some thousand dispersed to their homes, and the remainder, mutinous and demoralised, did not rally until they reached Tarragona. St. Cyr, however, did not think it advisable to take the road, which now lay open, to that city, but halted for a month to give his suffering troops rest, and to collect supplies sufficient not only to feed the city of Barcelona but also to provide for a further offensive movement. The Catalans recovered from their panic; Vives resigned and gave place to Reding; and by February 1809 this officer, having rallied his *migueletes*, and received arms from England besides further reinforcements from Granada and the Balearic Isles, was once again ready to take the field with thirty thousand men.

St. Cyr at this time had put his army into canton- 1809. ments south of the Llobregat, some twenty to thirty miles west of Barcelona, the length of his line being about thirty miles, with a front to the northern coast. Reding therefore divided the Spanish army into two wings, one of which, under himself, remained about Tarragona, while the other, under General Castro, was extended from thence in a huge arc sixty miles long, reaching to the Llobregat, as if to envelop the French. It seems that he cherished some vague design of turning their right with Castro's force, while he himself should advance upon their left. St. Cyr quietly concentrated three divisions, manœuvred Castro out of his position with the loss of all his magazines and of many prisoners, and turned south upon Reding's troops, hoping to find them still unconcentrated and to beat them in detail. Reding, however, had collected his divisions, and, after marching north to pick up the remnant of Castro's

1809. force, left four thousand of them in observation, and hastened back with some eleven thousand to guard Tarragona. St. Cyr, therefore, to intercept him, placed Pino's division, with which he himself remained, at Pla de Cabra, and Souham's at Valls, upon each of the two roads that led to the city, trusting that there would be time for one of the two divisions to succour the other, whichever might be attacked. But Reding, having made a night march, fell upon Souham early on Feb. 25. the morning of the 25th, some hours before St. Cyr had expected, and after a sharp action forced the French troops aside and opened the road to Tarragona. This done, he halted, and, seeing St. Cyr arrive with two regiments of cavalry, fell back away from Tarragona and took up a defensive position. St. Cyr, whose infantry had gone astray, watched him with great relief, for with a little skill Reding might have overwhelmed Souham's division. At last, after three hours' delay, Pino came up with the infantry, and St. Cyr made his attack in four massive columns with the bayonet. The Spaniards stood firm till the French were within a hundred yards of them, when they turned and ran. Three thousand of them were killed, wounded, or taken; the whole of their guns were captured, and the fragments of the beaten force took refuge in Tarragona, defeated, shaken, and demoralised. Poor Reding, after cutting his way through the French dragoons, escaped only to die of his wounds; and for a time all organised Spanish resistance came to an end in Catalonia.

Passing now to the Peninsula at large, Napoleon had dictated the following plan to King Joseph on the eve of his departure from Valladolid.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after driving the British to their ships Soult was to advance upon Oporto and Lisbon, leaving to Ney the pacification of Galicia; and the Emperor reckoned that Soult would reach the former city on the 1st, and the latter on the 10th of February. Upon the fall of

<sup>1</sup> Berthier to Joseph, 17th Jan. 1809; *Mém. du Roi Joseph*, v. 365 *sq.*

Oporto, Victor was to enter Estremadura, move upon Merida and push a column towards Lisbon, while Lapisse's division was simultaneously to march from Salamanca upon Ciudad Rodrigo and Abrantes so as to favour Soult's movements. After the fall of the Portuguese capital, Victor was to borrow a division from his brother Marshal, and invade Andalusia with forty thousand men. Meanwhile Zaragoza would, as Napoleon calculated, have fallen during the course of February,<sup>1</sup> and the troops employed in the siege could then complete the subdual of Aragon and Valencia. Thus the reduction of the Peninsula would be at an end. "The business in Spain is done," he wrote to Jerome on the 16th of January, but he modified the expression a week later into "The business in Spain is nearly at an end."<sup>2</sup> He had not yet learned that he was fighting against the Spanish nation, not against a Spanish army.

Let us now notice the details of this plan as regards the various spheres of operations; and it will be convenient first to observe those which concern Estremadura. In this quarter Napoleon's orders were that Lefebvre should cross the Tagus, scatter Galluzzo's troops and return to Talavera, leaving Lasalle's cavalry in observation about Almaraz. Lefebvre advanced accordingly, cleared the bridge of Almaraz at the first rush, and drove the Estremadurans in confusion beyond the mountains to the south. Then, however, instead of obeying his orders he turned north, in spite of repeated protests from King Joseph, as if to join the Emperor, and on the 5th of January entered Avila. Napoleon thereupon superseded him and sent him back to France, appointing General Sebastiani to command the Fourth Corps in his stead.

The wreck of the Spanish Army of the Centre had meanwhile been undergoing re-equipment and reorganisation at the hands of the Duke of Infantado at Cuenca. This officer, finding himself towards the end of December

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 14,716.

<sup>2</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 14,731, 14,734.



1808. at the head of some twenty thousand men, sent General Venegas with from five to six thousand troops to surprise a brigade of Latour-Maubourg's dragoons which lay at Tarancon, some fifty miles west of Cuenca ; directing also another column of four thousand men under General Senra to advance on Aranjuez. Venegas
- Dec. 25. narrowly missed capturing the dragoons, but they cut their way through his force and escaped ; while Senra, finding a strong body of infantry as well as cavalry at Aranjuez, did not venture to approach them. These movements gave the alarm to King Joseph, who, at the moment, could not have opposed more than nine thousand to Infantado's twenty thousand in order to fend the latter off from Madrid. But Infantado made no attempt to support his two advanced detachments,
1809. and on the 8th to the 10th of January the arrival of Dessolle's division and Sebastiani's corps set King Joseph at his ease. The French chain of posts was re-established to southward, and on the 12th of January Victor marched from Aranjuez with more than fifteen thousand men upon Tarancon. Venegas, however, had called Senra's corps to him, and retiring ten miles south-eastward to Ucles, had taken up a strong defensive position, apprising Infantado of Victor's advance and asking for orders. Infantado replied only by sending him a few more battalions and announcing that he would himself move forward, upon some uncertain day, with his reserves from Cuenca. Thus left to himself, Venegas drew up his troops, about eleven thousand men, with singularly little skill upon ground which was too much extended for their number ; and here he was
- Jan. 12. utterly routed by Marshal Victor on the 13th. One thousand of his soldiers were killed and wounded ; nearly six thousand prisoners and all of his few guns were taken, at a loss to the French of fewer than two hundred men. The fugitives ran into the vanguard of Infantado's main body within five miles of the battle-field, whereupon that General at once retreated by bad cross-roads to
- Jan. 20. Chinchilla in Murcia, where he arrived on the 20th,

having lost fifteen guns to the French dragoons on the 1809. way. Victor then entered La Mancha in search of a force of Andalusians, under the Marquis del Palacio, which was marching to Infantado's assistance, but finding that it had already retreated, halted at Madridajos, some seventy miles south of Madrid. For the present he could do no more against the Spanish Army of the Centre.

Meanwhile the great struggle in Aragon had begun, 1808. when after a month's delay, owing to the summons of Ney's corps to the pursuit of Moore, Marshals Moncey and Mortier invested Zaragoza with twenty-eight Dec. 20. thousand men. Within the city General Palafox had some forty thousand more or less organised soldiers, besides peasants and citizens; and he had used the four weeks of respite afforded to him to improve the defences beyond all recognition. This is not the place to tell the story of that famous siege, under the direction first of Moncey, next of Junot, and finally of Lannes; of the slow conquest by the French of outworks and enceinte; the desperate fighting from block to block of houses; and the final expedient of the French to force their way in by undermining the buildings and shattering them by explosions of gunpowder. By such means, but far more by the pestilence that for weeks had raged among them, the Zaragozans after two months of 1809. heroic resistance were driven at last to surrender. The Feb. 20. state of the town was then beyond description. One-third of it was a heap of ruins. Over fifty thousand persons had perished since the beginning of the siege, and the bodies of thousands were heaped up before the churches, or lay thinly covered beneath the surface of the streets. Ever since the street-fighting had begun, the French themselves had been poisoned by the stench from the doomed city; while the Spaniards had lived and died in the thick of all these horrors, and, dying, had served to multiply them. The losses of the French, once again rather through sickness than the sword, amounted to full ten thousand; and when the victors

1809. at length gained their prize, they made haste to abandon it, for Zaragoza had not been taken but slain.

With its fall perished for a time the army of Aragon ; but meanwhile the routed Estremadurans had rallied behind the Lower Guadiana under the command of General Cuesta, and were being reduced to discipline by him with merciless severity. The fragments of Infantado's army, having likewise been collected and strengthened with some of Palacio's levies, lay at La Carolina, about one hundred and fifty miles due south of Madrid, and this force was in process of reorganisation by General Cartaojal. Marshal Victor in the interval had retired to the Tagus at Almaraz, pursuant to Napoleon's orders that he should menace Lisbon by the line of that river, while Soult moved down upon it from the north. The two cavalry divisions of Milhaud and Latour-Maubourg, with headquarters at Ocaña and Madridejos, watched the approaches to the capital from the south, with two infantry divisions of Sebastiani's Fourth Corps in support, the one at Aranjuez and the other at Toledo. With the usual false confidence of the Spanish generals Cartaojal must needs take the

Feb. 18. offensive ; and, after an unsuccessful raid upon the French advanced posts, he led his army of about twelve thousand men to Ciudad Real and Manzanares, in the plains to north of the Sierra Morena. Here he remained stationary for the first three weeks of March, only making another raid upon the outlying French

March 27. cavalry ; until on the 27th he was surprised by Sebastiani in force at Ciudad Real, when he gave the order for instant retreat. A little pressure from the French cavalry soon converted this retreat into a rout, which cost the Spaniards five guns and two thousand prisoners. Cartaojal's force reassembled at La Carolina, little injured though much shaken ; but the General himself was removed from the command and replaced by General Venegas, who, with the help of new levies from Granada, strove to prepare the army again for the field. Cuesta likewise moved forward ; the excursion of

Lefebvre to northward having enabled him at the end 1809. of January to reoccupy the positions formerly held by Galluzzo about Almaraz. The French cavalry retired before him to the north bank of the Tagus; and Cuesta, after breaking down the bridge of Almaraz, took up his headquarters at Deleitosa to guard the passages at Almaraz itself and at Puente del Conde, the bridge next above it. King Joseph sent out Lasalle's cavalry to force him back; but, the ruggedness of the country making it impossible for this arm to act, he ordered Victor, who had over twenty thousand men concentrated about Talavera, to proceed into Estremadura, without waiting for the co-operation of Soult, and to open the great invasion of southern Spain. After raising many objections, Victor, on the 15th of March, threw his March 15. infantry across the Tagus below Cuesta at the bridges of Talavera and Arzobispo, and advanced full upon his right or eastern flank, his object being thus to clear the passage of Almaraz, towards which his cavalry and artillery moved simultaneously, taking with them a raft-bridge. Cuesta therefore changed the front of his right wing towards the east, and ordered it to hold a very strong position on the river Ibor, while at the same time he reinforced his troops opposite Almaraz. The French, however, forced the passage of the Ibor on the 17th, March 17. at a cost of five hundred killed and wounded; whereupon Cuesta ordered the whole of his force to retreat over the mountains upon Truxillo. The French cavalry crossed the river on their raft-bridge on the 19th, and on the 20th overtook the Spanish rearguard March 19. but could make no impression upon it, and indeed on the following day was roughly handled at Miajadas, a March 21. little to south of Truxillo.

Cuesta now retired due south upon Medellin in order to pick up a detachment which had been sent to him by Cartaojal, thereby leaving open the road to his base, Badajoz, and to Seville; but Victor, instead of pressing the pursuit, sent detachments to Merida and along the roads leading westward and southward. Mean-

1809. while Cuesta, having picked up his detachment of nearly five thousand men under the Duke of Alburquerque on the 27th, determined to take the offensive ; and Victor, being apprised of his movements, concentrated the French forces to encounter him at Medellin.
- March 27.
- March 28. Upon the next day the two hosts met, and the action opened with good promise for Cuesta, in spite of exceedingly faulty dispositions ; for General Latour-Maubourg launched his cavalry prematurely to the attack and was beaten back with considerable loss. But at the crisis of the battle the Spanish horse turned and fled with disgraceful precipitation, leaving their infantry exposed to the joint attack of the French infantry and cavalry on front and flank. Cuesta's line was broken to pieces and his army hunted from the field. Of nearly twenty thousand Spanish foot over seven thousand were killed, and nearly two thousand more, together with twenty out of thirty guns, were taken ; while Victor's loss did not exceed one thousand killed and wounded. Not for many days was Cuesta able to rally the fugitives of his army, and then only at Monesterio, some sixty miles south-east of Badajoz. For the moment, but, as shall be seen, only for the moment, the army of Estremadura had ceased to exist ; but still Victor remained halted at Medellin and Merida. He had no recent intelligence of Soult's movements, and without it he could not pursue the combined operations prescribed to him by Napoleon.

Our last sight of the Duke of Dalmatia was on the 18th of January, when his guns opened fire upon the transports that were bearing Moore's army back to England. Jan. 19. On the 19th the town of Coruña, which had faithfully covered the retreat of the British and might have defied the French army for weeks until siege-artillery should have been brought against it, was yielded up to Soult by the weakness or worse of the Governor. By this surrender the Marshal obtained not only the command of the harbour, but victuals, stores, and, above all, heavy guns. This enabled him on the 23rd of January to march with a part

of his force against Ferrol, which he summoned to 1809. surrender on the 25th. The place contained ten Jan. 25. thousand militia, some four or five thousand sailors, abundance of guns, and twenty thousand muskets recently landed from England; and thus provided, with its communications by sea unclosed, it might have defied Soult for months. But here again the Governor was treacherous, and delivered over the place, together with the squadron that lay in the harbour, after twenty-four hours of the feeblest defence. Immediately before this shameful event Soult received an intimation of Napoleon's plans and orders for the invasion of Portugal, with the dates so far modified that the 5th instead of the 1st of February was assigned for the capture of Oporto, and the 16th instead of the 10th for the occupation of Lisbon.<sup>1</sup> It behoved him, therefore, to re-equip his army for a fresh offensive campaign.

This was no easy matter, for Soult's troops had suffered little less than Moore's from the terrible march to Coruña. Ten thousand men, or one-fourth of the whole, were in hospital; half of the horses of the cavalry had perished; and the stragglers, from just dread of the ferocity of the Spanish peasants, were afraid to move onward except in large bodies. Moreover, the clothing of the soldiers had all been worn out, and could only be very imperfectly replaced by the exhausted cities of Galicia, and by such small stores as were to be found in the abandoned magazines of the British. Lastly, there was always the difficult question of transport. Soult was about to enter a country containing few roads fit for wheeled traffic, so that large numbers of pack-mules were absolutely necessary to the safety of his force; yet, owing to the continual demand for these animals by the British and Spanish armies, very few were now obtainable. Soult could only hope that he would meet with no more resolute resistance than had Junot.

<sup>1</sup> Translation in Napier, ii. 157-158.

1809. There was, indeed, little force at the moment to oppose him. Romana, after following the line of Craufurd's retreat for some distance, had halted at Orense to rally such men as he could collect of his army. Upon his first arrival he found that less than one-third of his force was with him; but a certain number of stragglers kept coming in, and he was able to organise two small bodies which were posted to observe the roads from Lugo on the north and Ponferrada on the east. The former was presently threatened by Marchand's division of Ney's corps, which was on its way to release Soult's garrisons in Galicia, and Romana wisely withdrew his whole force to the Portuguese frontier. Much straitened for victuals, with his soldiers half-armed and half-clothed, he wandered from town to town, wherever he could find food, appealing to the Central Junta and to the British General at Lisbon for money, muskets, and ammunition.<sup>1</sup>

The situation of that officer, meanwhile, had not been enviable. Sir John Cradock had arrived at Lisbon  
1808. to take over the command in Portugal on the 14th of December, by which time the British Ministers were already contemplating the possibility that the south of Spain would soon be the only practicable sphere of operations for a British army. Moore, as we have seen, had always been of that opinion, and had not concealed his hopes that he might shift his troops to a new base at Cadiz. The news of the capture of Madrid confirmed Ministers in this view; and on the 10th of December Colonel Sir George Smith was ordered to proceed to Cadiz as British Agent, and to sound the Spanish authorities as to their willingness to admit a  
Dec. 15. British garrison to the city. On the day after his arrival, however, Cradock received advice from Moore that he had countermanded his retreat, and was about to advance towards Burgos after all. Cradock thereupon bestirred himself to push forward every man that could possibly be spared to Moore's assistance, and with  
Dec. 21. such effect that by the 21st of December he had retained

<sup>1</sup> Oman, ii. 179-181.

little more than four thousand men in Portugal under 1809. his own command.<sup>1</sup>

The loyal energy with which Cradock stripped himself of troops for the benefit of Moore was the more praiseworthy inasmuch as he was aware that Sir John had decided to retreat, if need were, to Galicia, so that no help could be expected from him for the defence of Portugal. Little more could be looked for from Portugal itself; for the Regency was at its wit's ends for want of money and arms, and Cradock had no authority to supply them with either. Happily on the 20th of December Mr. Villiers arrived at Lisbon as Dec. 20. British Agent, with full powers to concert measures with the Regency; and Cradock at once addressed him concerning the defence of the country. The reports as to the Portuguese regular army were bad. The General declared that it could not be taken into serious account at such a crisis. "It will take time and labour," he wrote, "to make a Portuguese army." Forjaz, the Military Secretary to the Regency, and a really capable man, declared that he could not produce nineteen thousand serviceable arms;<sup>2</sup> and the utmost that he could hope to do, always supposing that the British Government supplied the necessary funds, was to move six thousand men as a corps of observation to Alcantara. The only sign of an organised force, apart from the British, was the Lusitanian Legion, a corps which Sir Robert Wilson, upon the suggestion of the Portuguese Minister in London, had been authorised to raise, in

<sup>1</sup> Sec. of State to Sir G. Smith, 18th Dec.; to Moore, 10th Dec.; Cradock to Sec. of State, with enclosures, 14th, 15th, 21st Dec., 1808. The troops detailed to remain in Portugal were the 20th L.D., 2/9th, 3/27th, 5/60th (sent back by Moore); 1st and 2nd Line Batts. of K.G.L.; 668 artillery British and German; to which perhaps should be added the 40th, who were at Elvas. The returns sent by Cradock to Villiers on the 20th and to Castlereagh on the 21st of December do not quite agree. To Villiers he says he kept the whole of the 1st Brigade K.G.L. at Lisbon, while to Castlereagh he mentions two batts. only.

<sup>2</sup> This is remarkable, for 32,000 muskets had been sent to Portugal before September 1808.—*Parl. Papers*, 1809, p. 898.



1808. order to employ certain Portuguese officers who had been detained in England on their way to Brazil. The British Ministers had undertaken to clothe, equip, and pay it until it was restored to its native country, when they hoped that it would be incorporated in the Portuguese army; but over this there was much difficulty. Wilson had raised three thousand men without trouble, thanks not a little to the activity of the Bishop of Oporto, who hoped to make these troops his own body-guard; but he could arm only thirteen hundred of them; and the Regency at large viewed the corps with not unnatural disfavour, because the commanding officers of several regiments had allowed their men to volunteer for service in it. Wilson, chafing under the attentions of the Bishop of Oporto, withdrew as soon as possible every man who was able to march from that city to Almeida. From thence he could observe Lapisse's division which, it will be remembered, was menacing the Portuguese frontier from its base at Salamanca. His work in that quarter will before long come prominently before us.

Practically, therefore, Portugal was defenceless, and the intelligence of Lefebvre's movement against Galluzzo to south of the Tagus seemed to portend an early invasion of the French on the side of Elvas. That fortress, together with Almeida one hundred and fifty miles from it, presented the only barriers against such invasion; and, since they were held each by a single British battalion, they were rightly regarded by Cradock as not worth the sacrifice even of these few troops. Some means of defence needed to be improvised within a few weeks; and the General, being, as he said, devoid of military resources of all kinds except pikes,<sup>1</sup> could think of no better expedient than to rouse the whole population to turn out, like the Spaniards, with such weapons as they could furnish for themselves. The

<sup>1</sup> Once again the reader must be reminded that 32,000 muskets had arrived in Portugal from England, so that it is difficult to account for Cradock's statement, though beyond question he wrote in good faith.

Regency so far acted upon this suggestion as to organise 1808. the population of Lisbon into sixteen legions, but under limitations so absurd as to make them practically useless. All was confusion owing to the impotence of the Portuguese authorities ; and Cradock, looking to the small number of British troops under his command, could only make every preparation to re-embark them, though with full resolution to defend Lisbon until the last moment.

By the beginning of January, however, it became 1809. practically certain that the last reinforcements despatched to Moore could never reach him ; and Cradock therefore recalled them and fixed upon a position at Sacavem, a few miles north of Lisbon, for his final point of concentration, resisting the importunity of the Regency that he should advance to Abrantes or even farther forward. He had now between eleven and twelve thousand men, of whom he reckoned that about one-half were at disposal for service in the field,<sup>1</sup> but the

<sup>1</sup> Distribution of the Troops in Portugal, Jan. 6, 1809 :—

	R. & F.
<i>Santarem.</i> Brig.-Gen. Stewart.	
Det. R.A. ; det. 20th L.D. 1/29th ; 2/31st ;	2,751
5th & 7th line Batts. K.G.L.	
<i>Almeida.</i> Brig.-Gen. Alan Cameron.	
Det. R.A. ; 1/45th ; 1/97th.	1,478
<i>Elvas.</i> Colonel Kemmis.	
Det. R.A. ; 1/40th.	712
<i>Sacavem.</i> Maj.-Gen. Mackenzie.	
Det. R.A. ; 2 troops 14th L.D. ; 2/9th ;	1,707
3/27th ; det. 5/60th.	
<i>Lisbon and</i> } Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Cradock.	
<i>Forts on Tagus.</i> }	
Det. R.A. ; 6 troops 14th L.D. ; det. 20th	3,201
L.D. ; 1st & 2nd line Batts. K.G.L. ; det.	
5/60th ; convalescents.	
<i>Oporto.</i>	
5 cos. 5/60th.	379

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Rank and file 10,228

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All ranks, say 11,500

Of which number there were available for the field :—

1809. difficulty of moving them was very great. The want of cavalry upon the frontier was severely felt; but it was found impossible to bring the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, which had landed from the Tagus about Christmas time, up to Almeida, even in minute detachments, from the difficulty of obtaining supplies. Meanwhile, Cradock's communication with Moore was entirely cut off, and he had no information of what was going forward in Spain, except that the French troops about Almaraz had inexplicably retreated, owing, as we know but he did not, to the extraordinary movement of Lefebvre upon Avila. Shortly afterwards, however, intelligence reached Cradock that the French had entered Salamanca, and that the British garrison of that place, seven companies of the Buffs,<sup>1</sup> was falling back upon Oporto with the ordnance-stores which had been deposited there. Then followed reports of the successful engagement of Moore's cavalry at Benavente; and Cradock, once more bending all his energy to the reinforcement of that General's army, actually embarked

Jan. 12 three regiments for Vigo.<sup>2</sup> He had hardly done so when fresh intelligence came in from Coruña that Moore was retreating upon that port, and that General Cameron, who had been trying to join Sir John with two battalions from Almeida, had been compelled to fall back, and was on his way to Oporto. At the same time there reached Cradock despatches from England, dated the 24th December, to the effect that, though a certain number of troops were to be left in Portugal to help the Portuguese Government in the defence of the country, yet that the British field-army was to be

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Dets. R.A.; 14th L.D.; 20th L.D.; 2/9th;	R. & F.
3/27th; 1/29th; 2/31st; det. 5/60th; 5th &	5221
7th Line Batts. K.G.L.	
Or of all ranks, say	<u>5875</u>

<sup>1</sup> The grenadier company of this regiment, according to Cameron's History of the Buffs, accompanied Moore.

<sup>2</sup> 14th L.D.; 2/9th; 3/27th.

employed elsewhere in the Peninsula, "where most advantageous to the common cause." While, therefore, Portugal was to be held for as long as possible, the troops were to be concentrated in positions from which they could easily fall back upon Lisbon; and, if the enemy should approach the capital in overwhelming force, they were to be re-embarked. Further despatches hinted that the new sphere of operations would be about Cadiz, for the defence of which five thousand men would shortly be sent out from England; and Cradock was empowered to ship troops from his own force to Cadiz without waiting for further orders.

It is difficult to conceive of a situation more embarrassing than that of Cradock during the first two months of his command. He could obtain no information as to Moore, though Frere kept urging him to make a diversion in Spain, and he was obliged to make preparations to meet all possible contingencies, whether to reinforce Moore, advance, retreat, defend Portugal to the last extremity, or re-embark. The Regency was as yet inefficient; the Portuguese army was worthless, and the population of Lisbon in a state of nervous excitement which vented itself in occasional murderous attacks upon isolated British soldiers. The orders which had just reached him were complicated by the receipt of a message from Sir George Smith at Cadiz. That officer, after inspecting the outworks, decided that they would require a garrison of twenty thousand men, and the city itself ten thousand. Since only five thousand Spanish militia and volunteers were at hand, Smith, knowing nothing of Moore's march to Sahagun, asked Cradock if he could spare troops from Lisbon; and Cradock, reading the request by the light of his last despatches from England, not unnaturally decided to comply.<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to his instructions he had already

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman writes that Cradock "had chosen to fall in with Sir George Smith's hasty and unauthorised scheme for the defence of Cadiz." But Cradock had no means of knowing that it was either hasty or unauthorised; it was quite in accordance with his

1809. issued conditional orders for the evacuation of Elvas and Almeida, and he therefore embarked some four battalions for Cadiz under Major-General Mackenzie,<sup>1</sup> at the same time directing the Fortieth to march to the same destination by way of Seville. This signified a serious diminution of Cradock's force, which, however, was in some measure made good by the arrival from Oporto and from other quarters of about three thousand invalids and stragglers of Moore's army, many of whom marched down with General Cameron's three battalions<sup>2</sup> from Oporto. These Cradock organised into two battalions, which we shall know later on in the year as the "battalions of detachments." But Cameron's troops were worn down by fatigue, having, as Napier says, marched eight hundred miles in continual rain.

Feb. In such circumstances Cradock's position became more and more difficult, and matters were made worse at the beginning of February by rumours of a great reverse in the north about Coruña. Incessant gales sealed up the ports to northward; and until late in February, try as he might, Cradock could obtain no authentic information of what had actually occurred. The Regency became steadily more troublesome, and the populace of Lisbon more insulting and insubordinate, being not a little encouraged by the wretched aspect of the British troops, whose clothing was by this time in a deplorable state. The continuance of stormy weather in the Tagus was extremely disquieting in case of a re-embarkation; but none the less Cradock was bound to make preparations for such an event, though he was fully resolved to hold on to Lisbon till the last moment. Fearful, however, of the results of a retreat through the capital to the ships, he resolved to withdraw the

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latest intelligence of the Cabinet's policy; and Castlereagh acknowledged (to Cradock, 16th Feb., 1809) that his compliance with Smith's request was fully justified by his instructions.

<sup>1</sup> 2/9th; 3/27th; 1/29th; 2/31st; 1/40th; 1 co. R.A. 4271 of all ranks. A second company of artillery was embarked a few days later.

<sup>2</sup> Buffs, 45th and 97th.

troops outside the city and to concentrate them near the mouth of the Tagus; while at the same time he embarked all his superfluous stores and dismounted the batteries that commanded the river. Looking to the tenor of his instructions, which till the end of February treated the evacuation of Portugal as inevitable sooner or later, and to the general uncertainty of the situation, Cradock can hardly be condemned for taking these precautions; but he committed the mistake of making his intentions too obvious to all observers, with the result that the mob of Lisbon became outrageously violent, while the Regency attempted to curry favour with it by throwing every obstacle and insult in the way of British officers<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The authorities for the foregoing account of Cradock are Sec. of State to Cradock: 18th, 20th, 27th Nov., 24th Dec., 1808, 6th, 28th Jan., 1809; Cradock to Sec. of State, 14th, 15th, 21st, 24th Dec., 1808; 4th, 9th, 19th, 31st Jan., 2nd, 8th, 12th, 14th Feb., 1809. Mr. Oman (ii. 199) says that this portion of the correspondence in the Record Office has been "mysteriously lost." It has, however, been found and is numbered W.O. I. 232. The want of these documents has concealed from him the fact that throughout January Cradock was thinking far less of defending Portugal than of pushing up reinforcements to Moore. This accounts for the dispersion of his troops and for his unwillingness to undertake any other forward movement. Again, Mr. Oman blames Cradock for not making such forward movement, discredits his plea of want of transport and supplies, and says that by "marching light" he could have reached any goal that he chose. Cradock's commissaries, however, as quoted by Napier, bear out his statements completely; and he himself complained that, from want of forage, some dragoons whom he had sent up to the frontier returned half starved. As Napier points out, much of the transport taken by Moore had never been paid for, and the population was consequently far from friendly. The unfortunate Cradock, who had been told that the main body of the British army was to fight elsewhere, and that only a small force was to be left, not to defend, but to aid in the defence of Portugal, and to embark if the task were found to be impossible, was in a very difficult position, and one which cannot be compared with that of Wellesley a few months later. When Wellesley, in the autumn of 1809, found himself in much the same position as Cradock, he expressed Cradock's opinion in his own terse language: "It is difficult if not impossible to bring the contest for Lisbon to extremities, and

1809. In the second week of February came a new com-  
Feb. plication in the shape of a letter from Frere to Cradock, deprecating the occupation of Cadiz by British troops as unnecessary and likely to lead to the worst political consequences, and forwarding a request of the Supreme Junta that Mackenzie's troops should be sent round to Tortosa to relieve Zaragoza. Now Canning had written to Frere on the 9th of December 1808, urging him to approach the Spanish Government as to the admission of British troops to Cadiz as the new base of their operations in Spain.<sup>1</sup> He was aware, he said, of the jealousy of the Spaniards upon this point—which jealousy, it must be explained, was due to the fate of Gibraltar—but the British Government abjured all interested motives, and having made great sacrifices expected Spain to meet them in the like spirit. After many wanderings the Supreme Junta had finally drifted into Seville on the 19th of December; but it does not appear that Frere ever broached this delicate question to them, for Canning wrote again on the 14th of January 1809, expressing much annoyance that he had not done so. "The employment of the British army in the south of Spain," he wrote in effect, "depends on the admission of a British corps into Cadiz. Without the security of that fortress we cannot, after Moore's experience,<sup>2</sup> again risk an army in the interior of Spain." And he then announced that Ministers, without awaiting the result of Frere's negotiations, had decided to send four thousand men<sup>3</sup> direct to Cadiz under General

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afterwards to embark the army." Napier is perfectly right in saying that the constant changes in the plans of the Cabinet were the true cause of Cradock's caution, though he makes no allowance for the difficulties of the unfortunate Cabinet.

<sup>1</sup> Castlereagh had written to Moore on the same subject on 10th Dec. 1808; but the passage referring to it is not printed in the Papers presented to Parliament.

<sup>2</sup> This of course refers to the first retreat of Moore before his subsequent advance to Sahagun.

<sup>3</sup> 1/Coldstream Guards, 1/3rd Guards, 2/87th, 1/88th, 2 batts. Light Artillery. The 83rd was to have accompanied them, and

Sherbrooke, with the expectation that they would be 1809. admitted.

It is evident that this decision of the Cabinet was arrived at long before it was communicated to Frere ; but the original idea, as was intimated to Cradock in December, was that Sherbrooke's force should go first to the Tagus and there await orders. The destination was, however, altered on the 12th of January to Cadiz direct, though Sherbrooke was charged to keep the change a profound secret. He was instructed not to land his troops in Cadiz without Frere's sanction, though he was given to understand that they were the "advanced guard of the British army." The expedition sailed early in January, but was dispersed by a storm, nor were the transports reassembled at Cork until the end of February ; and in the interval Frere found an opportunity to sound the Junta as to the acceptability of Canning's intentions. The occasion was the re-embarkation of Moore's army, against which the Junta cried out aloud, protesting that it was an abandonment of the whole cause of Spain. Frere sought to reassure them by averring that the red coats would shortly land in Cadiz ; whereupon the Junta protested against any such idea, unless Cadiz should prove to be the ultimate point of refuge both for the Spaniards and their allies. However, the re-shipping of Moore's people seemed likely to bring matters to a crisis. Canning wrote urgently that the admission of British troops to Cadiz had now become an imperative necessity, and intimated that Cradock had received orders to carry his force thither if compelled to evacuate Portugal ; while Frere, long before receiving these last letters from his chief, extracted from the Junta an expression of willingness to receive a British army wherever disembarked. But the bungling of Canning at the Foreign Office ruined

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the entire force, by exaggeration of the strength of the 2 batts. of Guards, was set down at 5100 r. and f. of infantry alone (Sec. of State to Cradock, 24th Dec. 1808), but the infantry that actually sailed with Sherbrooke numbered only 2897 rank and file.



1809. everything. Smith himself, it is true, had been greatly to blame, for he had been specially instructed not to summon British troops except at the request of the Spanish authorities. But, on the other hand, by a foolish blunder, the mission of Smith was not confided to Frere, and Smith had received no orders to communicate with him; from which the Junta concluded that Smith's business was of such an underhand nature as could not be entrusted to the Ambassador, and set their faces against it accordingly.

Jan. 29. Hence it came about that when, on the 29th of January, the news of Mackenzie's coming reached Cadiz, the Spaniards with ominously grave faces asked Frere what it might portend. The Ambassador tried to laugh the matter off as perfectly natural, but was fain to add that he had no wish to see Cadiz occupied by British soldiers except in case of extremity. The Junta took him at his word, and sent down a member of its own body, the Marquis Villel, to see that it was fulfilled.

Feb. 5. On the 5th of February Mackenzie arrived with a part of his troops, and was told by Smith that Villel had raised objections to his landing, though it was hoped that those objections might be overcome. Mr.

Feb. 6. Charles Stuart appeared next day as the agent of Frere; and he, together with Smith and Mackenzie, waited upon Villel, who lamented that he had no authority to permit the British to disembark in Cadiz, but proposed that they should do so at Puerto Santa Maria on the north side of Cadiz Bay. This suggestion Mackenzie very properly

Feb. 8. declined to accept, and two days later he received from Frere the final decision of the Supreme Junta that his troops should not be admitted to Cadiz. Frere's first and perfectly correct instinct was to send the force back to Lisbon; but, entertaining still some hope of bringing the negotiation to a successful issue, he pressed Mackenzie to land at Puerto Santa Maria in order to humour the Spanish Government. Once again the General resolutely and rightly refused; but, as Smith was still sanguine of gaining his point, he consented to

keep the transports on the spot. A few days later 1809.  
Smith was taken ill and died; Stuart departed for Feb. 15.  
Vienna on a secret and absolutely unauthorised mission,  
and the whole conduct of the business fell into the  
weak and unpractical hands of Frere.

He now suggested that, in order to bribe the Spanish Government, Mackenzie should leave a fragment of his force at Cadiz, and march with the rest to join Cuesta in Estremadura, whither Sherbrooke's detachment should in due time follow him. For the third time the General rejected the proposal, knowing, as Frere should have known, that it was contrary to the main principle of the British Cabinet's policy; but, being aware that the population of Cadiz itself was anxious to admit the British troops, he proposed as a compromise to land only two of his battalions at Cadiz and to send the other to join the Fortieth, which had been enthusiastically received at Seville. Whether Frere ever submitted this idea to the Junta is doubtful; the one thing certain is that, instead of attending to his legitimate business of diplomacy, he still tried to play the general. He now wrote to Mackenzie to say that the French would soon be driven behind the Ebro, and that he had better take his battalions to Tarragona to liberate the Spanish garrison in that place for service in the field. Mackenzie was upon the point of complying with this request, as the last hope of persuading the Junta to allow Sherbrooke to enter Cadiz, when he received a letter from Cradock requiring his immediate return for the defence of Portugal. He sailed, accordingly, for Lisbon on the 6th of March and reached it on the 12th, on which same day Sherbrooke's detachment, March 12.  
having been recalled when off Cadiz by fresh orders from England, cast anchor likewise in the Tagus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie's narrative in Napier, ii., Appendix 9; Canning to Frere, 9th, 10th Dec. 1808; 14th, 23rd Jan. 1809; Frere to Canning, 1st, 29th Jan., 9th, 21st Feb., 4th, 14th March 1809; Mackenzie to Sec. of State, 9th, 22nd Feb., 3rd March 1809; Sherbrooke to Sec. of State, 6th Jan, 1st, 9th, 10th, 11th, 14th Feb., 9th, 12th March; Sec. of State to Sherbrooke, 23rd Feb. 1809.

1809. Such was the first attempt of the British Ministers to obtain a footing in Cadiz, an attempt which failed chiefly through the blunders of Canning and Frere. The point is worth dwelling upon, for it led the Cabinet to a momentous decision. Upon the first report of Smith's premature action and its immediate consequences, Canning, not knowing of his death, recalled him, and intimated to Frere that the detachments both of Mackenzie and Sherbrooke had been ordered to return to the Tagus. "But," he added, "without a fortress to fall back upon, we will not commit our troops in the heart of Spain, nor will we fritter our force away among the Spanish armies. If the Spaniards do not desire our assistance we have no desire to press it on them. We have therefore decided to reinforce the army in Portugal to a strength equal to the defence of that country. This will make a powerful diversion." It was, therefore, sheer want of a sphere of operations which induced Ministers to fall back upon Portugal; for such military opinions as they had taken upon the subject, those, namely, of Moore and Cradock, were adverse to such a course. "I am not prepared at this moment to answer minutely your question as to the defence of Portugal," Moore had written in one of the busiest moments of his short campaign, "but I can say generally that the frontier of Portugal is not defensible against a superior force. It is an open frontier all equally rugged, but all equally to be penetrated. If the French succeed in Spain, it will be vain to resist them in Portugal. The Portuguese are without a military force, and from the experience of their conduct under Sir Arthur Wellesley no dependence is to be placed on any aid they can give. The British must in that event (the success of the French in Spain), I conceive, immediately take steps to evacuate that country. Lisbon is the only port, and therefore the only place where the army with its stores can be embarked. . . . We might check the progress of the enemy while the stores are embarking and arrangements are being made

for taking off the army. Beyond this the defence of Lisbon or of Portugal should not be thought of.”<sup>1</sup> “We must not be misled,” wrote Cradock to Villiers a month later, “by the supposed idea of a frontier of Portugal. It is at present only a name. The rivers running generally east and west present no line of defence except Almeida and Elvas, which are one hundred and fifty miles apart. There is no other defence.”<sup>2</sup>

It so happened, however, that in February the Portuguese Government had come to an agreement with the British that their troops should be placed under the command of a British officer, with power to appoint additional officers of the same nation; the British Government, on its side, undertaking to provide arms, ammunition, and pay. Such a hold upon the military resources of Portugal materially altered the situation; and Castlereagh now turned to Sir Arthur Wellesley and asked for his views upon the question. “I have always been of opinion,” wrote Wellesley, in extremely clumsy language, on the 7th of March, March 7. “that Portugal might be defended, whatever might be the result of the contest in Spain; and that in the mean time the measures adopted for the defence of Portugal would be highly useful to the Spaniards in their contest with the French. My notion was that the Portuguese military establishment of forty thousand militia and thirty thousand regular troops ought to be revived, and that in addition to these troops His Majesty ought to employ an army in Portugal amounting to about twenty thousand troops, including about four thousand cavalry. My opinion was that, even if Spain should have been conquered, the French would not have been able to overrun Portugal with a smaller force than one hundred thousand men; and that, as long as the contest should continue in Spain, this

<sup>1</sup> Moore to Castlereagh, 25th Nov. 1808. Cradock to Villiers, 20th Dec., enclosed in Cradock to Sec. of State, 21st Dec. 1808.

1809. force,<sup>1</sup> if it could be put in a state of activity, would be highly useful to the Spaniards, and might have eventually decided the contest." Wellesley then proceeded to show that the Portuguese army could not be revived except at British expense, and that, until the work should have been accomplished, the British force should consist of at least thirty thousand men.

A conflict of opinion, seemingly direct and irreconcilable, between two such men as Moore and Wellington, demands at least some brief examination; when it will appear that the points of difference between the two generals were really very superficial. First and foremost, Moore had found the Portuguese army a mere name, and drew his conclusions accordingly. Wellesley formulated his views upon the hypothesis that the Portuguese forces should be restored to efficiency. All that he affirmed in his memorandum, so far as can be judged from the obscurity of the wording, is that, if the Portuguese military establishment were revived upon its old footing of seventy thousand men, and if twenty thousand British were added to these, then one hundred thousand French troops would be needed to conquer Portugal; and that, if the struggle in Spain were continued, it would be exceedingly improbable that so large a number of French could be spared for the purpose.<sup>2</sup> Thus, there-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman (ii. 287) construes this to mean the 20,000 British only. I conceive it to mean 70,000 Portuguese in addition to 20,000 British, founding my opinion upon Wellesley's letter to Castlereagh of 25th Aug. 1809. "My opinion is that we ought to be able to hold Portugal [by which he meant Lisbon] if the Portuguese army and militia are complete."

<sup>2</sup> If I had not myself seen the original of Wellesley's memorandum of 7th March, in his own handwriting, I should strongly suspect that the first three paragraphs had been drawn up from memory of conversations with Wellesley by Castlereagh, to whom, curiously enough, the entire document is ascribed in the *Castlereagh Corres.* (vi. 39). The grammar of the first paragraph (which Mr. Oman has changed in three places when quoting it) halts oddly between the past and present tenses. "I *have* always been of opinion. . . . My notion *was* . . . my opinion *was*. . . . The Portuguese

fore, though Moore had no time to go into details, 1809. he and Wellesley agreed that the defence of Portugal must depend upon the maintenance of the struggle in Spain. Wellesley himself in 1809 confirmed the correctness of the views of Moore and Cradock concerning the indefensibility of Portugal against a superior force, and even as to the impossibility of protecting Lisbon till the last moment without very grave risk. "There are," he wrote, "so many entrances into Portugal, the whole country being frontier, that it would be very difficult to prevent the enemy from penetrating; and it is probable that we should be obliged to confine ourselves to that which is most important—the capital. It is difficult, if not impossible, to bring the contest for the capital to extremities and afterwards to embark the British army"; and in proof of this assertion he pointed out that the French could manœuvre the British out of Lisbon by occupying the heights of Almada over against the city on the southern bank of the Tagus.

Thus to all intent the two men were at one upon

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establishment *ought to be* . . . even if Spain *should have been* conquered . . . as long as the contest *should* continue . . . this force *would be* highly useful, and *might* eventually *have decided* the contest." The two next paragraphs are almost wholly in the past, and the remainder in the present and future. Moreover, there is a contradiction in the first paragraph, for it begins by saying, "I have always been of opinion that Portugal might be defended, whatever the result of the contest in Spain"; but a few lines later, "My opinion was that, even if Spain should have been conquered, the French would not have been able to overcome Portugal with a smaller force than one hundred thousand men." From this last sentence it is plain that Wellesley did not think Portugal defensible against this number, even by 20,000 British and 70,000 Portuguese. This halting and obscure language is so foreign, as a rule, to Wellesley that I find it difficult to account for. He seems to have wavered at first between antedating his opinion to the days of Vimeiro, and only after writing three paragraphs to have delivered it as his present conviction. Beyond all doubt the memorandum was written to Castlereagh's order, and possibly at first with some diffidence. The original, as usual, shows very few corrections, and it is possible that Castlereagh furnished a rough draft of the opening paragraphs.

1809. all essential and unchangeable points of the question ; and the variance between them turned entirely upon the regeneration of the Portuguese army. The fact is remarkable, inasmuch as Moore delivered his opinion avowedly as a crude one, sketched under great pressure of business, whereas Wellesley formulated his judgment at his leisure and in totally different circumstances. "I should mistrust my own judgment or opinion, if opposed to Moore's," wrote Wellington, years later, "in a case where he had an opportunity of knowing and considering. But he positively knew nothing of Portugal, and *could* know nothing of its existent state." No criticism can make us the less admire Wellesley's astonishing insight in divining the impassable limits of French power in the Peninsula ; but it is still possible to praise it without belittling the just fame of another great man. If Ministers, misreading Moore's letters, treated Wellesley's contention as to the defensibility of Portugal with excessive distrust, the blame should surely not be ascribed to Moore.<sup>1</sup>

The precise date when Wellesley's appointment was decided upon is uncertain ; but, though Castlereagh had a desperate struggle to prevail with the Cabinet to accept it, the day cannot have been later than the 28th of March.<sup>2</sup> On the 30th, Castlereagh broke gently to Cradock that he was to be superseded, and three days

<sup>1</sup> "The greatest disadvantage under which I labour is that Sir John Moore gave an opinion that that country could not be defended by the force under his command" (Wellesley to Liverpool, 2nd April 1810). Moore gave no such opinion. He said that the Portuguese frontier was indefensible against a superior force, which was true ; and that, if the French succeeded in Spain it would be vain to resist them in Portugal—a condition which, thanks not a little to Moore himself, was never fulfilled. Wellesley evidently cannot have seen Moore's letter.

<sup>2</sup> On the 24th, Col. Walker of the 50th wrote to Wellesley to ask him to take the regiment in service to the Continent, where operations were reported to be intended. Wellesley answered on the same day that he had no reason to expect a command on the Continent. On the 28th Wellesley reported to the Duke of Richmond that he had accepted the command in Portugal. *Wellington MSS.*

later he wrote to Wellesley his letter of service. The <sup>1809.</sup> troops ordered to embark for Portugal at the same <sup>April 2.</sup> time numbered nearly five thousand rank and file of infantry, and thirty-three hundred cavalry,<sup>1</sup> or about nine thousand of all ranks, making with the regiments already in Portugal a force of over twenty-six thousand of all ranks. In consequence of the refusal of the Spaniards to admit the British to Cadiz, Wellesley was instructed to make the defence of Portugal his first object, and, while undertaking it in concert with the Spanish armies, to enter upon no general operations in Spain without the authority of the Government. Foul winds detained Wellesley for some days; in the course of which he heard that the French were advancing into Portugal from the north and east. Thereupon he sent Charles Stewart to Castlereagh to point out that, upon arrival, he might find the army embarked or Cradock already engaged in active operations, and to ask for further orders to meet such a contingency. If Stewart is to be believed, Wellesley at this moment was most reluctant to proceed to his destination, and was driven to do so by the peremptory decision of Castlereagh. However, on the 15th of April he sailed from Portsmouth, and on the 22nd arrived in the April 22. Tagus.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, events had been moving rapidly in Portugal. On the 30th of January Soult set his advanced Jan. 30. cavalry in motion southward, which in a few days received the surrender of Vigo and Tuy, and on the 2nd of February reached the River Minho and the Feb. 2. frontier of Portugal unopposed. The French infantry followed them at an interval of a week; and by the

<sup>1</sup> *Infantry*: 2/7th, 576; 2/24th, 780; 2/30th, 630; 2/48th, 717; 2/53rd, 699; 2/66th, 667; 2/83rd, 850. Total, 4919.

*Cavalry*: 3rd D.G. 672; 1st D. 672; 4th D. 672; 16th L.D. 672; 1st L.D., K.G.L. 606. Total, 3294.

*Total*: Cavalry and Infantry, 8213 rank and file; say, 9200 of all ranks.

<sup>2</sup> *Londonderry MSS.*, C. Stewart to Castlereagh, 20th Oct. 1809.



1809. 13th Soult's entire army was in the vicinity of the  
Feb. 13. river. The usual passage of the Minho being commanded by the guns of the fortress of Valença, the Marshal moved down nearly to the mouth of the river at Campos Saucos, and, having collected fishing-boats, attempted to throw his troops across on the morning of  
Feb. 16. the 16th. The effort failed owing to the difficulties of a very heavy flood, added to the fire of hundreds of Portuguese peasants from the southern bank; and Soult, much irritated, moved up the stream to the bridge of Orense, abandoning the good road by the coast for a rough track leading over the mountains to Chaves on the upper Tamega. From the moment when he turned north-eastward from Tuy, his columns were incessantly harassed by bands of peasants which hung about his flanks, taking advantage of every difficulty of the road. Twice with excessive boldness they attempted to bar the way, but were overthrown with  
Feb. 18. severe loss; yet, none the less, Soult decided to send back his heavy artillery and wheeled vehicles to Tuy, and to prosecute his march with pack-animals only, carrying with him twenty light guns and a dangerously small reserve of ammunition of any kind. On the 21st he reached Orense and occupied it unopposed, Romana making no attempt to second the peasants, but sitting  
Feb. 22. idly twenty miles to southward. On the following day Soult's rear divisions fought their way through the insurgents to the main body, not without sharp engagements and some loss; and the Marshal then halted for nine days to collect supplies, repair his gun-carriages, and endeavour by pacific manifestos to reconcile the inhabitants to French domination. During the halt he received a message from Ney, which was brought to him only with infinite difficulty, telling him that the whole of Galicia was in revolt, and asking his assistance in suppressing the insurgents. The news was of course perfectly true, and signified that, if Soult continued to move southward, all communication between the two Marshals would be severed. Soult, however, decided

to obey the Emperor's orders, and on the 4th of March 1809.  
continued his march upon Oporto. March 4.

Thereupon the military Governor of Traz-os-Montes, General Francisco Silveira, gathered together such rude levies as he could collect, and assembled at Chaves, some fifty miles south-east of Orense, a mixed mass of regular troops, militia and peasants, amounting in all to some twelve thousand roughly armed men. The neighbouring province of Entre-Douro-e-Minho, under the impulse of the Bishop of Oporto, also sent a large mob of men to guard its own frontier, supported by a small body of regular troops, under General Bernardino Freire, at Braga. But in Traz-os-Montes Silveira was left to himself and to the co-operation of Romana, with whom, so far as was possible between chiefs and armies which detested each other, he had concerted operations. Soult, knowing of Romana's presence, had determined to attack him and drive him south; but the Marquis on the 5th decided to abandon March 5.  
the Portuguese, and retreated eastward along the Spanish frontier to Puebla de Sanabria. His rear-guard was caught on the 6th by General Franceschi's cavalry, March 6.  
and utterly dispersed with a loss of seven hundred killed and taken; but his main body made its escape in safety. Silveira, meanwhile, lay in his position at Villarelho on the right bank of the Tamega, and on the 5th sent forward a detachment to Villaza, which was rudely handled by the head of Soult's principal column, and fell back to its main body. Hearing of Romana's departure, Silveira on the 7th withdrew to the heights March 7.  
of San Pedro, three miles to the south of Chaves, where the ground offered a favourable position for defence. Soult, after three days' halt at Monterrey in order to close up his columns, continued his march on the 10th along both banks of the Tamega, sweeping March 10.  
away the feeble resistance of Silveira's advanced parties; and, upon the approach of the French to Chaves, the Portuguese general prudently resolved to retire. His troops thereupon broke out into mutiny; and, with

1809. open threats that they would shoot him, a disorderly party of over three thousand men threw themselves into the town to defend it to the last. On the same evening Soult invested the place, and during the 11th advanced against Silveira, who retreated south-westward to Villa Real; after which for the second time Soult summoned Chaves to surrender. Twenty-four hours of vapouring and idle waste of ammunition had sufficed to exhaust the courage of the garrison; and on the 12th the French occupied the place by capitulation.

Unable to spare troops to guard his prisoners, Soult dismissed the irregulars to their homes, and offered the regular troops, both Portuguese and Spanish, which he had taken, the option between captivity and entry into the French service. The majority preferred to change sides; and this fact, together with the mutinous behaviour of the Portuguese levies at large, was not lost upon Sir John Cradock. From Chaves to Oporto there were two roads: the first following the Tamega southward to Amarante, and thence making a bend north-westward and south-westward to Penafiel; the second leading nearly due west over the Serra de Cabrera upon Braga, and thence due south upon Oporto. Soult chose the latter as being at once the better and the more direct, and presenting further the chance of dispersing Freire's levies at Braga; though, on the other hand, it passed through a succession of dangerous defiles where a resolute enemy might offer formidable opposition. On the 14th, therefore, he moved off to westward, making at the same time a feint movement towards Villa Real to deceive Silveira. He was met by a desperate resistance from the villagers, and from them only, for Freire was neither a soldier nor a leader, and could not station his troops skilfully nor control them effectively. Three days' march amid incessant petty attacks from the brave Portuguese peasants brought the French cavalry on the 17th to Carvalho d'Este, six miles from Braga, where it came upon the whole of Freire's disorderly levies drawn up on a range of hills.

Freire himself, in mortal terror of his own followers, 1809. tried to escape to Oporto, but was brought back and murdered; an officer of his staff shared the same fate; and the command was given by acclamation to Baron Eben, a German officer of the Lusitanian Legion.

Eben seems to have done what he could to fortify his position during the three days of grace allowed to him while Soult's main body was coming up; but on the 20th the Marshal attacked him with sixteen thousand men and shivered his wretched host to pieces. March 20. Seventeen guns and four hundred prisoners only were taken by the victors; but no fewer than four thousand of the Portuguese perished by the sword. Weeks of harassing and a long tale of murdered stragglers had made the French soldiers savage; and, though not more than two hundred of themselves had fallen in the action, they had many injuries to avenge. The victory was great, but very far from decisive. The majority of the fugitives rallied within ten miles of the battle-field; General Botelho, with an armed band of militia and regulars, moved down the Lower Minho to block the road to Tuy; and Silveira, on the very day of the action, moved back and invested Chaves, where Soult had left a garrison of only one hundred fighting men and twelve hundred invalids. The spirit of the Portuguese, as of the Spaniards, was not easily broken.

Soult now converted Braga into an advanced base under the charge of one division, and moved on in three columns along three parallel roads upon Oporto. At the river Ave the Portuguese strove stubbornly to check him; and Jardon, the "voltigeur general," lost his life in the fight; but by patience and skill Soult carried the passage with little loss, and on the 27th March 27. was before Oporto. There all was confusion and disorder; a long period of anarchy, varied by murderous outbreaks, having culminated since the defeat of Braga in an orgy of riot and massacre. The place had been formidably entrenched, and nearly two hundred guns had been mounted; but the thirty thousand

1809. men who formed the garrison were without leaders and without discipline. After a fruitless summons to the Bishop to surrender, Soult resolved to storm the city

March 29. on the morning of the 29th. Long before the French columns appeared the Portuguese gunners, unnerved by a thunderstorm, opened fire from every gun ; and when the assault was finally delivered at seven o'clock, the resistance of the garrison was soon overcome and converted into a panic. Soldiers and civilians, men, women, and children fled in frantic terror towards the river, and were either pressed into the water directly, or, making for the bridge of boats, found that the drawbridge had been raised by the foremost of the fugitives, and so were precipitated by thousands into the stream. The French, too, did not spare the combatants, and the number of the Portuguese slain and drowned cannot have fallen short of eight thousand. The French soldiers, of whom not five hundred had fallen, passed for a time completely out of control, and indemnified themselves for past hardships, sufferings, and humiliations by sacking the city from cellar to garret, with the usual accompaniments of rape, drunkenness, and wanton destruction. Nevertheless they were recalled to their duty within twenty-four hours, which was in the circumstances creditable both to them and to Soult ; and the Marshal might justly plume himself upon a great victory. Yet, as has been well said,<sup>1</sup> he had really secured for himself no more than a new base of operations. Even before he had stormed Oporto, Silveira had received the surrender of Chaves with its garrison of thirteen hundred efficient and invalid men ; while on the 28th Vigo, having been beset for five days by the British frigates at sea and by Galician insurgents ashore, capitulated likewise, yielding some eight hundred able prisoners to the British naval officers. Galicia, in fact, so fully occupied the attention of Ney that he could not spare a man to help the second corps. Soult had ploughed his way successfully through the turbid

<sup>1</sup> Oman, ii. 249.

flood of Portuguese insurrection, but the waters had closed behind him. 1809.

According to Napoleon's design, it will be remembered, Soult's advance upon Lisbon from the north was to have been supported by a simultaneous advance of Marshal Victor along the valley of the Guadiana, and of General Lapisse from Salamanca by Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, both of which fortresses he was instructed to capture, upon Abrantes. Victor, as we have seen, after the victory of Medellin, had halted at Merida, thinking himself unable to move farther without reinforcements. Lapisse with his nine thousand men at Salamanca fulfilled his duty very ill, and remained practically inactive throughout January, February, and March, though confronted at first with no more formidable force than a battalion of the Lusitanian Legion under Sir Robert Wilson. Sir Robert, who was a great partisan leader, with all the gifts and all the defects of a Peterborough or a Cochrane, at once took up a forward position near Almeida and declined to leave it. When warned by Cradock that Almeida must be evacuated by the British, and that the entire British force would probably be re-embarked shortly,<sup>1</sup> he merely garrisoned that fortress with some of his own men, and made so bold a display of his handful of troops that Lapisse, overrating his strength, would not venture to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman (ii. 256) is very severe upon Cradock for advising Wilson at the same time to bring off his British officers and embark with the rest of the British army. Surely it is fair to remember that, without such advice, Wilson would have felt bound to stay; that if the British evacuated Portugal (and there is no doubt that the Cabinet was resigned to evacuation if not resolved upon it) the Lusitanian Legion, as a corps in British pay, must have been dissolved; and that, in the same event, Portuguese resistance would have been, as Cradock said, hopeless. What would have been said of Cradock if he had evacuated Portugal and left these officers to their fate? They would have escaped to England with some difficulty, and filled the country with their complaints against him. Cradock's advice was, in fact, simply a signal of recall, which Wilson and his officers need not obey unless they wished, but might plead in justification if compelled to abandon a hopeless task.

1809. advance. Being later reinforced by Spanish levies to a strength of over three thousand men, Wilson, perceiving the timidity of his opponent, took the offensive, beat up the quarters of Lapisse, and at last occupied the pass of Baños, so as to cut off his communications with Victor. Already completely isolated from Soult, Lapisse became more than ever unwilling to go forward ; and thus it was that until after the end of March his force counted in the general operations for nothing, or even for worse than nothing, since his inactivity encouraged insurrection upon all sides. Thereby one of Napoleon's principal combinations was wrecked ; and, though the fact is most creditable to the boldness and resource of Wilson, it is even more discreditable to the feebleness of Lapisse.

To Cradock the movements of the enemy at the beginning of March were still very obscure. They seemed to him to be slow and unenterprising, and for these peculiarities he was unable to account ; though he did not accept the reports sent in from three different quarters, by Romana in the north, Wilson at Ciudad Rodrigo, and Captain Benjamin D'Urban at Cuesta's headquarters, that there was every appearance of a French evacuation of Spain.<sup>1</sup> Owing to the absence of Mackenzie's Brigade at Cadiz he was still very weak ; but this did not prevent the Regency from pressing him to lead some of his troops to the Zezere to command the passages from Beira and Alemtejo, and to send others to Alcantara to cover Cuesta's left flank. Cradock declined to accept either of these proposals. His belief was that Portugal without Lisbon was of little value to the French, and that they would be less likely to move upon it if the British force were kept compactly together before the city, than if it were dispersed to hold isolated positions in advance. He was also persuaded that the slightest retrograde movement would exert a disastrous moral influence upon the population,

<sup>1</sup> Brotherton to Cradock, 13th March ; Cradock to Sec. of State, 6th March ; D'Urban to Cradock, 8th March, 1809.

and that it was therefore better to stand back until he 1809. could march forward, than to stand forward with every prospect of being compelled to fall back. He consented, however, in the first week of March to station his main body at Lumiar, five miles north of Lisbon, with his advanced posts at Bucellas and Montachique, and an intermediate detachment at Loures to support them. Beyond this he would not go ; nor can he, I think, be blamed, for he was as yet quite uncertain whether the British Ministers had decided to defend Portugal or not.

Very soon, however, Cradock's situation improved. Two batteries of artillery arrived from England on the 2nd and 5th ; Beresford also presented himself to take March 25. command of the Portuguese army ; and, most important of all, despatches of the 27th of February came in from England, promising reinforcements and giving definite orders to recall all troops from Cadiz, to make every effort to hold Portugal for as long as possible, and to prepare the army for service in the field. Thus the long period of doubt was ended at last ; and, to brighten the prospect still further, the brigades of Sherbrooke and Mackenzie, the Fortieth Regiment excepted, arrived from before Cadiz on the 11th. Cradock had now March 11. nearly sixteen thousand sabres and bayonets,<sup>1</sup> and could reckon that, after providing for the safety of Lisbon and of the maritime forts, he could spare twelve thousand for service in the field. The companies of the Fifth Battalion of the Sixtieth, after some wanderings since their dismissal from the front by Moore and Hope, had been collected, and bade fair, when a few bad characters should have been weeded out, to re-establish their former reputation as invaluable light troops—a very necessary part of an army in a contest against the French. Cavalry, however, which was even more necessary than light infantry, was scarce, the entire number of horses being fewer than nine hundred ; while it was impossible to find horses or mules enough for the

<sup>1</sup> 15,842 rank and file—say 17,500 of all ranks. Return of 18th March 1809, in Cradock to Sec. of State of same date.



1809. artillery, to say nothing of those required for transport. It was only with great difficulty that two battalions were equipped with very bad animals ; and Colonel Robe of the artillery wrote that two hundred and seventy horses and mules were urgently required for the remainder. As a whole the commissariat and artillery together needed some eight hundred mules in addition to the few that they possessed, but were unable, in spite of all efforts, to secure them. At his wits' end Cradock sent officers to the coast of Barbary to endeavour to procure animals there ; and he was early compelled to inform Castlereagh that, for the artillery at any rate, horses must be sent out from England. But even if horses were procured, forage was almost unobtainable ; and the troopers of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, recently arrived from home, were already falling off rapidly in condition. The fact was that, owing to the demands of Junot, Wellesley, Moore, and the Portuguese army in the year 1808, the country was completely exhausted.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the French designs began to grow clearer. Soult's movement eastward towards Chaves was somewhat obscure, and the object of a large detachment of his army (for such Lapisse's division was reported to be) at Salamanca was not quite obvious ; but it was tolerably certain that if Soult crossed the Minho, Lapisse would penetrate into Upper Beira. Portugal might be considered safe from invasion by Victor's army so long as Cuesta remained unbeaten ; and both Cuesta and the Supreme Junta pressed for a detachment of Portuguese troops to move to Alcantara, a request with which Beresford was ready to comply.

<sup>1</sup> Cradock to Sec. of State, 6th, 20th, 30th March 1809 ; and see authorities in Napier, ii. Appendix V. Mr. Oman (ii. 206) looks upon Cradock's statements as to the dearth of horses and mules as "astounding" and "incredible." Looking to the fact that Moore had found equal difficulty in procuring transport-animals in November 1808, and that his guns and their ammunition-waggon were drawn by "a motley collection of mules, horses, and oxen" (Duncan's *History of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 213-214), I confess that I see nothing very astounding or incredible in it.

But now Frere again came forward in the character of a 1809. commander-in-chief. He had already tried to fritter away part of the British force at Tarragona, and had positively refused to allow the Fortieth Foot to be withdrawn from Seville. He now assumed that Soult would remain motionless in the north, and urged Cradock to lead the British force up the Tagus to join Cuesta, and with him to drive the French from Toledo and Madrid. Simultaneously the Bishop of Oporto wrote to Cradock that without British help Oporto would be lost. The General honestly lamented that he could not save the city; but, while Victor lay upon his flank at Merida, he judged it unsafe to expose Lisbon by an advance to the north. Moreover, as he justly said, the anarchy in Oporto must make all defence unavailing; and it was difficult to say what part the mob might not take against the British troops if the proceedings of the latter did not suit its views at the moment. Then on the 1st of April came the news, without any details, of the fall of Oporto, and of Cuesta's defeat at Medellin. This last, as Cradock said, laid Portugal open upon its most vulnerable side, and forbade any advance to meet Soult. The panic was great. Badajoz called out loudly for reinforcements; and Beresford strongly urged Cradock to make a short march northward to put some heart into the country. The General, having received on the 4th April 4. a consignment of artillery horses, and a reinforcement of five battalions under Major-general Hill,<sup>1</sup> moved forward to Obidos, Caldas, and Rio Mayor, with an advanced April 8-14. corps pushed still farther to the north. Now, however, Cradock was informed that his efforts to obtain animals in Barbary were fruitless; and the problem of providing for the transport of ammunition and victuals seemed hopeless of solution. It is true that about this same time April 18. he received the news of his supersession by Wellesley in

<sup>1</sup> 2/7th, 30th, 48th, 53rd, 66th, 83rd. Total, 4139 rank and file. But one transport with 300 men of the 30th did not come in with the rest, reducing the total to 3839.

1809. the command of Portugal, and of his appointment to the Governorship of Gibraltar ; but he did not consider difficulties to be overcome by transferring them to the shoulders of another, and he wrote home to represent once more the exhausted state of Portugal and the dearth of animals and supplies. On the 21st he moved the army forward to Leiria, having on the previous day written in his last despatch to Castlereagh, "As soon as our equipment is complete, and our supplies assured, and we have no anxiety about Marshal Victor, we shall advance to dislodge Soult." On the 22nd Sir Arthur Wellesley landed at Lisbon ; on the 24th he took over command of the army, and Cradock's military career was at an end.

Napier has recorded his opinion that Sir John was unworthily used ; and, though undoubtedly Ministers were right and wise to supersede him by Wellesley, it seems to me that the opinion is justified. For months Cradock had been placed in one of the most trying positions which a commander can occupy ; set down, that is to say, with a small force in a foreign country disorganised by a hostile invasion, with a new and inefficient Government, a bankrupt treasury, and a suspicious and excited population ; and then bidden to make preparations simultaneously for defence and for re-embarkation. Napier long ago pointed out that such orders were self-contradictory, and it is very certain that Cradock felt them to be so. The first point perfectly clear in Castlereagh's instructions was that Cradock was upon no account to risk the loss of his force ; the second was that Ministers were anxious to find another base of operations in the Peninsula in lieu of Lisbon, and were prepared to evacuate Portugal at any moment. In such circumstances it was impossible for Cradock to look upon the occupation of Portugal as more than a temporary measure ; and this uncertainty alone naturally sufficed to deter him from incurring either risks or obligations.<sup>1</sup> He could not be blind to

<sup>1</sup> "The precarious tenure of this country by British troops has

the obvious fact that Ministers were undecided as to 1809. their own intentions; and, just as a nervous hand upon the reins will destroy the confidence of the cleverest horse, so must indecision in Downing Street impair the resolution of commanders in the remotest field.

When at last at the end of February Ministers definitely made up their minds to a real effort to save Portugal, General, troops, and Portuguese alike had been demoralised by three months of suspense. Cradock had sent many of his soldiers to Cadiz under the impression—and it was a correct impression—that such was the wish of the British Cabinet; and it was not until the 11th of March that he recovered them. On that day for the first time he reckoned that he could spare some thirteen thousand British for active service in the field; but he had only received orders to mobilise them three or four days earlier; and the Portuguese army, which was supposed to assist him, had not yet been under Beresford's command for a full week. Of his dearth of cavalry and his difficulties in obtaining transport, enough has already been said; and it must be added that directly he hinted at an intention to advance, the Portuguese Regency begged him to leave in Lisbon—a town which contained seventy thousand armed, undisciplined, and turbulent men—a garrison sufficient to preserve tranquillity. No reinforcements of men or horses reached him until the 4th of April, and none of cavalry until the 14th, by which later date he had already been aware for a week that he was to be superseded. In fact, from the day when he received orders to mobilise until the day when he received the news of his supersession, the time was just one month—a month which brought him endless foolish entreaties from the

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hitherto precluded the possibility of establishing such an advantageous contract for the public as, in more permanent cases, might necessarily be expected; we have literally been supplied from hand to mouth.”—Commissary Rawlings to Cradock, March 1809. Napier, ii. Appendix V.

1809. Supreme Junta, Frere, and the Portuguese Regency ; while he received at the end the stunning news of the fall of Oporto and of the defeat of Cuesta at Medellin.

Cradock may not have been, probably was not, a very enterprising man ; but he showed at least firmness in resisting all importunities that he should disperse his force, and he handed it over to Wellesley united and compact for service in the field. By the light of knowledge which he never possessed and would have paid thousands to acquire, and by the issue of later events which occurred in very different circumstances, it is easy to condemn him for excessive timidity and prudence. It is no less easy to throw the whole blame of his caution upon Ministers, and to condemn them likewise without making allowance for their difficulties and their divisions. Too much should not be made of the shortcomings of either. Only a very few months had passed since the Spanish armies had been scattered to the winds, and Moore's troops had re-embarked after a terrible retreat. It was not obvious at first sight that there was still a chance of success in the Peninsula ; and since Castlereagh, with Wellesley's help, realised within six weeks of receiving the news of Coruña that there was such a chance, and converted his colleagues to his view within two weeks more, we have hardly the right to criticise either his insight or his courage.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

WHEN Wellesley took over the command in Portugal, 1809. the French were still showing the same inactivity that had so much puzzled Cradock. In one respect only had there been an important change. Upon the request of Marshal Victor, King Joseph had directed that the division of Lapisse at Salamanca, instead of advancing upon Abrantes as Napoleon had designed, should move to Alcantara and aid the operations of the First Corps. The direct route by Bejar being blocked by Sir Robert Wilson at the pass of Baños, Lapisse upon the 6th of April 6. April marched upon Ciudad Rodrigo and sat down before it, in the hope of attracting Wilson to the help of the beleaguered city. Wilson at once fell into the trap ; and Lapisse, making a forced march southward, crossed the Sierra de Gata at the pass of Perales, took his way safely to Alcantara, which he stormed and sacked, and on the 19th joined Victor at Merida. The April 19. effect of this movement was to isolate Soult completely, and to put an end for ever to Napoleon's projected combination against Lisbon, while at the same time it did not serve in the least to quicken the activity of Victor, who remained stationary at Merida.

Soult likewise was prolonging his halt at Oporto. After the capture of the city he had sent General Loison eastwards into Traz-os-Montes to gain intelligence of the movements of Lapisse ; but General Silveira, after the capture of Chaves, had taken up a position on the east bank of the Tamega, and defied the efforts of Loison to force a passage. It was neces-

1809. sary for Soult to reinforce Loison to a strength of over six thousand men ; and Silveira, emboldened by success, was rash enough to offer battle to this force with his April 18. half-trained levies before Amarante. He was defeated with great loss ; but, by the gallantry of a British officer, Colonel Patrick, the pursuit of the French was arrested at the bridge, and Silveira was able to rally his troops and to occupy an entrenched position beyond it, which secured the passage over the river. Once again Loison was brought to a stand and obliged to ask for reinforcements, which raised his detachment to nearly nine thousand men ; but mere increase of his numbers was for the present of little profit to him, for the river was impassable owing to floods. All bridges except that of Amarante had been broken down, and that of Amarante itself had been mined, so that it was necessary not only to drive the Portuguese from it but to prevent them from blowing it up when they retired. By the ingenuity of a French officer this last difficulty May 2. was overcome.<sup>1</sup> On the 2nd of May the bridge was carried, and the Portuguese, surprised in their entrenchments, fled without firing a shot, leaving ten guns and some hundreds of prisoners behind them. Thus were the forces of Silveira for a time dispersed, having kept a large proportion of Soult's army fully employed for the best part of a month.

Throughout this time Soult was busying himself with foolish visions of assuming the crown of Northern Lusitania, the chief result of which dreams was to stir up a conspiracy in the army against the authority not only of Soult but of the Emperor himself. The plans of the conspirators were far advanced when Wellesley landed, and one of the leaders, Argenton, having been passed through the Portuguese lines to Coimbra, and thence forwarded to Lisbon, was admitted to Wellesley's presence on the evening of the 25th of April. Argenton's proposals were that the British General should press hard upon the French army so as to force Soult

<sup>1</sup> The story is well told by Mr. Oman, ii. 270.

to concentrate it, when the disaffected would seize the Marshal and his principal officers, and place them in confinement. Wellesley, while careful not to discourage the traitors, declined to commit himself until matters should have gone further; and there for the present the affair ended. The British General had his own designs upon Soult, and put more trust in them than in those of a feather-brained French captain.

Wellesley had now actually under his command, or on passage to join him, something over eight and twenty thousand British and German troops of all ranks, of which about five and twenty thousand were ready for immediate service. In addition to these there were some fifteen to sixteen thousand Portuguese, including three weak regiments of cavalry, which Beresford had for the last six weeks been licking into shape. For the most part they were still raw and half-trained, though improving; but at least two battalions were remarked by one of Wellesley's staff to be in the finest possible order. Altogether, therefore, he had some fifty thousand men of one kind and another to his hand, with thirty guns, eighteen of them British and twelve German, for it had been found impossible to provide teams for more.<sup>1</sup> Cradock had already established a depot at

<sup>1</sup> Return in Wellington *Supp. Desp.* vi. 211-212; Duncan, *History of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 245.

*Cavalry.*

3rd D.G., 4th D., 14th L.D., 16th L.D., 20th L.D. (4 troops),  
23rd L.D., 1st L.D.K.G.L., 4 troops Royal Waggon  
Train. Total: 167 officers, 4691 N.C.O. and men.

*Infantry.*

1/ Coldstream Guards, 1/3rd Guards, 1/3rd, 2/7th, 2/9th,  
2/24th, 3/27th, 29th, 2/30th, 2/31st, 1/40th, 1/45th,  
2/48th, 2/53rd, 5/60th, 2/66th, 2/83rd, 2/87th, 1/88th,  
97th, 2 cos. Royal Staff Corps.

K.G.L. 1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th line batts., 1 garrison co.

559 officers, 20,406 N.C.O. and men.

2 batts. of detachments (900 and 980). All ranks, 1880.

*Artillery.*

British, 5 batteries, } say, 35 officers, 1200 N.C.O. and men.  
German, 2 batteries, }

Grand Total. 28,183.



1809. Santarem, with which there was communication by water from Lisbon, so that it remained only for Wellesley to settle the administrative details of transport and supply before entering upon his campaign. A project for the organisation of the Portuguese Commissariat was awaiting his approval, and was criticised and amended by him with his usual stern good sense. In the matter of transport for his army he fell back upon ox-waggons, though with every intention of replacing the waggons as soon as possible by pack-mules or by horses, of which he was expecting a supply from England.<sup>1</sup> For, though he came to Portugal with all the glory of former victories about him, with reinforcements at his back, and in fact with everything to commend him to the Portuguese people, he was as little able as Cradock to perform the miracle of finding mules where they did not exist.<sup>2</sup> He was also not a little hampered by want of money,<sup>3</sup> the British Treasury being still embarrassed in the highest degree by the dearth of specie; and he was obliged to open his campaign amid much clamour of creditors, with no more than £10,000 in the military chest.

Wellesley's determination to advance, however, doubtless smoothed all ways for him. Shortly before

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Of the above the 3rd D.G. landed on April 26-27, and the 4th D. probably about the same time; the 23rd L.D. were still on passage. As these could not be fit for hard work for three weeks or a month, 2100 must be deducted on their account. The 1/40th also were at Seville, some 900 strong. Altogether, therefore, 3000 must be deducted from the grand total.

I take the figures from a return of 1st May in *Military Transactions of the British Empire*, excepting the "battalions of detachments," the figures for which are based on Cradock's returns of 18th March. This return of 18th March shows the regiments much weaker than on 1st May.

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Castlereagh, 24th April 1809. Memorandum of an arrangement for the Commissariat, 2nd May 1809. *Wellington Desp.* iv. 271, 294.

<sup>2</sup> So precious were transport animals that he actually sent ships round to Puerto Santa Maria to bring away 100 mules which had been collected by the 40th Regiment at Seville for their own use. Wellesley to Admiral Berkeley, 2nd May 1809.

<sup>3</sup> Wellesley to Huskisson, 5th May 1809.

his arrival intercepted letters had revealed that Soult, 1809. while advancing upon Lisbon from the north, was looking for the co-operation of French corps by way of Salvaterra.<sup>1</sup> At first there had been some doubt whether this pointed to a movement by Lapisse upon Salvaterra do Extremo, a little to north of Alcantara, or by Victor upon Salvaterra de Magos, on the Tagus nearly due east of Torres Vedras; but the doubt was solved by the intelligence that Lapisse had joined Victor at Merida, and that in consequence communication between Soult and Victor was impossible. It remained for Wellesley to decide whether to drive Soult from Portugal or to lead his army against Victor, in conjunction with Cuesta, who was now at Llerena, midway between Merida and Seville, nearly ready to take the field with some twenty-five thousand men. Judged from a purely military standpoint, the movement against Victor was preferable, for the defeat of the First Corps would not only relieve Seville and Lisbon, but remove all possibility of Soult's further advance, and indeed tell greatly in all quarters to the disadvantage of the French. But, on the other hand, though the reason was not directly put forward by Wellesley, the organisation of his transport and supply service must still have been very imperfect; Cuesta was known to be a difficult colleague; Wellesley's instructions limited him strictly to the defence of Portugal; there was still some probability that the British Government would make its principal effort on behalf of Spain from Cadiz;<sup>2</sup> and lastly, since Soult was in possession of the city of Oporto and of the most fertile province of Portugal, there were strong political reasons in favour of expelling him. Within forty-eight hours, therefore, Wellesley decided to advance against Soult, and, having pushed him outside the frontier, to stand on the defensive in that quarter, and to return to the Tagus to deal with Victor. He

<sup>1</sup> Cradock to Sec. of State, 12th April 1809.

<sup>2</sup> That this was in Wellesley's mind is shown by his letter to Frere of 24th April. *Despatches*, iv. 268.

1809. did not expect Soult to await his coming, but, on the other hand, he did not purpose to follow him into Galicia; and here must be noticed Wellesley's penetrating insight into the true conditions of the war.

To all intent the French held only so much of Spanish territory as they could overawe by the shadow of their bayonets. To use a homely simile, Spain was like a sheet of parchment which has been kept perpetually rolled up, and the French army like a block of metal made up of thin layers. To hold Spain down it was necessary to spread out the whole of these layers; and, while they were so spread out, the peasantry acted, so to speak, like an acid, perpetually worrying at their edges, making a notch here and a notch there, but, though slowly reducing their bulk and their weight, unable wholly to remove them. The British army, however, presented itself as a heavy instrument, to resist the impact of whose blow it was necessary to collect all the layers and to pile them anew one upon another into a solid block. Where the block stood, the parchment was held heavily down; but everywhere else it curled up again into its original form, refusing to be flattened until the layers should be spread out once more. Wellesley divined the situation exactly. In Galicia, doubting lest he might break his hammer upon the consolidated block of the French, he preferred that the metal layers should remain dispersed and exposed to the continual fretting of the acid. Yet he saw that the contest must be ended not by the acid but by the hammer. "I am convinced," he wrote two days after his arrival in Lisbon, "that the French will be in serious danger in Spain only when a great force shall be assembled which will oblige them to collect their troops."<sup>1</sup>

Having then made up his mind that his first operations should be in the north, he gave orders on the April 27. 27th for the concentration of one brigade of cavalry, eight brigades of infantry, five batteries of artillery, and some six thousand Portuguese at Coimbra, on suc-

<sup>1</sup> To Frere, 24th April 1809.

cessive days from the 30th of April to the 4th of May. 1809. The next business was to detail a force to protect Portugal against a possible incursion by Victor during his absence; an event which, looking to the revival of Cuesta's army, Wellesley regarded as exceedingly improbable. For this service he appointed seven battalions, five squadrons and three batteries of the Portuguese army, three regiments of Portuguese militia, four British battalions, two regiments of British cavalry and one British battery,<sup>1</sup> the whole amounting to some seven thousand Portuguese and five thousand British of all ranks. The entire force was under the orders of Major-general Mackenzie, who was instructed to hold the line of the Tagus if Victor advanced on the south of that river, and the line of the Zezere if he advanced on the north. The Tagus was in flood, and as Wellesley had taken measures to collect all the boats upon alarm of an invasion, he judged that it would be a full month before Victor would be able to cross it. Thus lightly did he conjure away the spectre of the First French Corps, which had for so long daunted Cradock from an advance against Soult. But it must be remembered that the revival of Cuesta's army was not known, nor had Mackenzie's two regiments of British cavalry arrived, until after Wellesley had taken over the command.

On the 2nd of May Sir Arthur reached Coimbra, and on the 4th he reorganised his force so as to include May 4. five of the best Portuguese battalions in the British brigades.<sup>2</sup> He also introduced the innovation of attach-

<sup>1</sup> 3rd D.G., 4th D., Baynes's 6-pounder battery. 2/24th, 3/27th, 2/31st, 1/45th. The three battalions last named had formed Mackenzie's brigade under Cradock's latest organisation of the army. The 2/24th was one of the newly arrived regiments at Lisbon. It is noteworthy that Wellesley left the two regiments of British cavalry on the Tagus because he could not find forage for them on the road to Coimbra. Wellesley to General Edward Paget, 4th May 1809.

<sup>2</sup> *Order of Battle* :—

*Cavalry Brigade.* Maj.-gen. Cotton.

\* 14th L.D. (1 troop 3rd Hussars K.G.L. attached),  
16th L.D., 2 squadrons 20th L.D.

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\* 1 squadron detached to Beresford.

1809. ing a company of the Fifth battalion of the Sixtieth to five out of the seven British infantry brigades, leaving the remaining five companies together in a sixth. The remaining British brigade, Stewart's, was supplied with light infantry by men of the Forty-third, Fifty-second, and Ninety-fifth in the first battalion of detachments,<sup>1</sup> who had formed part of Craufurd's brigade in Moore's army. The line battalions of the German Legion had in each company ten riflemen, who in action were massed together and placed under independent command; and, since detachments of two of the Light battalions were also present, the Germans were well

*Guards Brigade.* Brig.-gen. F. Campbell.

1/ Coldstream Guards, 1/3rd Guards, 1 co. 5/60th.

*1st Brigade.* Maj.-gen. Hill.

1/3rd, 2/66th, 2/48th, 1 co. 5/60th.

*3rd Brigade.* Maj.-gen. Tilson.

5 cos. 5/60th, 1/88th, 1st batt. Portuguese Grenadiers,  
\*2/87th (detached to Beresford).

*5th Brigade.* Brig.-gen. A. Campbell.

2/7th, 1/10th Portuguese, 2/53rd, 1 co. 5/60th.

*7th Brigade.* Brig.-gen. Cameron.

2/9th, 2/10th Portuguese, 2/83rd, 1 co. 5/60th.

*6th Brigade.* Brig.-gen. R. Stewart.

1st batt. detachments, 1/16th Portuguese, 29th.

*4th Brigade.* Brig.-gen. Sontag.

2nd batt. detachments, 2/16th Portuguese, 97th, 1 co.  
5/60th.

*2nd Brigade.* Maj.-gen. Mackenzie.

3/27th, 1/45th, 2/31st (detached to Tagus).

*K.G.L.* Maj.-gen. Murray.

von Langwerth's brigade, 1st and 2nd line batts.; von  
Low's brigade, 5th and 7th line batts.

*Riflemen.* Major von Wurmb. 10 men from each co.  
of four line batts., detachment from 1st and 2nd  
Light Battts.

*Artillery.*

*British.* Lawson's battery (light 3 prs.), Lane's battery  
(light 6 prs.), Baynes's (light 6 prs., detached to  
Tagus).

*German.* Rettberg's battery (light 6 prs.), Heise's  
battery (long 6 prs.).

<sup>1</sup> The first battalion of detachments was made up of the 28th, 38th, 43rd, 52nd, 92nd, and 95th.

furnished with sharp-shooters. This novel distribution of riflemen formed part of Wellesley's tactics for meeting those of the French. From the first the revolutionary armies had gained their victories by covering their front with swarms of skirmishers, whose fire shook the ranks of the opposing infantry and made them yield readily to the subsequent assault of dense columns with the bayonet. Napoleon applied the principle for the express purpose of bewildering the commander opposed to him. He would worry the enemy's line from end to end with artillery and skirmishers until a weak point discovered itself, and then launch his bayonets upon that point. This system served very well against generals who allowed themselves to be flustered, but it had the great defect of assigning too important a part to shock action, to the neglect of missile action. Wellesley designed to match skirmishers against skirmishers, so as to keep his main line of infantry intact, and to meet the charge of the bayonets with a volley of bullets.<sup>1</sup> At Vimeiro, it will be remembered, Fane's skirmishers cleared the front so late as to mask the fire of the British guns at a moment when the French columns were dangerously close to the batteries; but the result, far from being disadvantageous, was to make the British volley the more deadly. Since therefore Wellesley was resolved to use the musket primarily as a missile weapon rather than merely as a spear, which was the French practice, the formation of his infantry into the accepted line, two deep, followed as a matter of course, because thereby was gained the greatest possible frontage of fire. There was nothing quite new in the whole conception, except the particular employment of riflemen as skirmishers. The light companies of battalions had long been employed to engage hostile light infantry before the clash of the main bodies on both sides, and the shock action of men in column had been met and defeated by missile action

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman was the first to discover and to point out this most important feature in Wellington's tactics.

1809. in line at Wandewash, at Maida, at Vimeiro, and at Coruña. But Wellesley himself at Vimeiro had massed the whole of his riflemen into a single brigade at a single point of his position, and Moore at Coruña had held his battalion of the Ninety-fifth at first in reserve. Now, however, Wellesley was alive to the advantage of the rifle in the skirmishing line, from its superiority both in range and accuracy; and therefore a peculiar interest attaches to the order of battle issued at Coimbra.

May 4. On the 4th Wellesley received the news of the defeat of Silveira on the Tamega, and of his retirement across the Douro to Lamego. This intelligence compelled him to alter his plans. He had hoped, while himself advancing upon Soult's front, to reinforce Silveira with the Portuguese levies of Colonel Trant and Robert Wilson, so as to cut off his enemy's retreat into Traz-os-Montes and to drive him back to the Minho, which at that season could hardly have been passed in the presence of a pursuing army. The loss of the bridge of Amarante put an end to any such expectations; and Wellesley was obliged to content himself with ensuring that the French should at any rate be prevented from crossing the Douro, and should be compelled to retire northward. With this object he entrusted to Beresford Tilson's brigade of British infantry and a body of Portuguese, making in all some six thousand men,<sup>1</sup> with orders to move north-eastward to Vizeu, pick up Wilson's detachment of Portuguese there, and proceed northward to join Silveira at Lamego. Arrived there, Beresford was to do his utmost to prevent

<sup>1</sup> *British*.—2/87th, 1/88th, 5 cos. 5/60th, 2 squadrons 14th L.D.

*Portuguese*.—5 batts. infantry, 3 squadrons cavalry, 2 field batteries.

Mr. Oman states rightly that one squadron only of the 14th L.D. was with Beresford's force. Cannon's Record of the 14th L.D. says that two were with him; but the difference is more apparent than real, for the 14th had 64 horses unserviceable within a fortnight of landing, which weakened the regiment by the strength of over half a squadron. *Well. Desp.* iv. 305.

the French from passing the Douro ; and he was even authorised to cross that river and to occupy Villa Real, so as to cut off the French retreat to the east, if he could find a very good position where he might be sure of holding his own until Wellesley could join him. But Sir Arthur deprecated any imprudent action. The Portuguese troops were not yet to be trusted ; and he did not wish to see a solitary British brigade exposed to the attack of Soult's whole army. "Remember," he wrote to Beresford in another letter of the same day, "that you are a commander-in-chief, and must not be beaten ; therefore do not undertake anything with your troops unless you have some strong hope of success." With these instructions following him, Beresford marched on the 6th of May for Vizeu.

On that same night Wellesley rode out to Martede, May 6. about ten miles north of Coimbra on the road to Aveiro, to meet Argenton for the second time, having chosen that particular spot in order to conceal from the Frenchman as far as might be the number and movements of the British troops.<sup>1</sup> The conspirator had little of real importance to say, and was sent away through by-roads so that he should see as little as possible. On the following day Wellesley's advanced guard<sup>2</sup> marched northward upon Oporto, and the campaign was fairly begun. Soult's army at the moment was still widely scattered. Delaborde's division was at Oporto ; Loison with some seven thousand men was about Amarante ; Lorge's dragoons were watching the Portuguese leader, Botelho, on the Lima ; Mermet's division had been pushed forward towards the Vouga, with Franceschi's cavalry in advance. All were serenely unconscious of the vicinity of the British. On the 8th Wellesley May 8. halted the advanced guard for a day, so as to allow

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Trant, 3rd May 1809.

<sup>2</sup> 3 squadrons 14th L.D., 1 battery R.A., Stewart's brigade. Napier says that the cavalry and Paget's division marched on the 7th ; Wellesley himself says "the advanced guard," the composition of which is given in Leslie's *Military Journal*, p. 106.



1809. Beresford's corps to get well forward with its turning movement, and ordered the following dispositions. Cotton with his cavalry was to march before dawn of the 10th along the great road to Oporto and try to surprise Franceschi's advanced posts at Albergaria Nova ;<sup>1</sup> while Stewart's and Murray's brigades followed by the same road in support. Meanwhile Hill's brigade was to embark at Aveiro early on the 9th, and time its movements so as to land at Ovar on the morning of the 10th, taking care not to show itself until Cotton should have reached the French outposts. Hill was then to join hands with Cotton at the junction of the roads from Coimbra and Ovar, and to attempt to pass the bridge at Oporto on the heels of the French rear-guard, or at any rate to prevent the destruction of the bridge ; and he was especially to make it his care to collect all boats that were to be found on the left bank of the river. Cameron's brigade was to follow Hill's by water to Ovar, and the remainder of the force to advance by the main road to Oporto.<sup>2</sup> In all the troops thus set in motion numbered some sixteen thousand British and twenty-four hundred Portuguese, organised for the time into three divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, under Generals Sherbrooke, Paget, Hill and Cotton.<sup>3</sup>

The British cavalry reached the south bank of the Vouga on the 9th, passed the bridge before midnight, May 10. and at dawn came up with the French picquets before Albergaria Nova. The enemy turned out hastily and

<sup>1</sup> This stroke was attempted by the advice of Colonel Trant, who had accidentally been admitted to Albergaria Nova under a flag of truce. "They have no idea of the British being at hand," he wrote, "nor do they credit the report of reinforcements having arrived at Lisbon." Trant to Wellesley, 1st May, *Wellington MS.*

<sup>2</sup> G.O. 8th May 1809.

<sup>3</sup> *Sherbrooke's Division*.—Guards, Campbell's and Sontag's brigades, 1 battery 6 prs.

*Paget's Division*.—Stewart's and Murray's brigades, 1 battery 3 prs., 1 battery 6 prs.

*Hill's Division*.—Hill's and Cameron's brigades, 1 battery 6 prs. Cavalry : Lieut.-gen. Paget, Maj.-gen. Cotton.

in some confusion ; but, Franceschi having with him a 1809. regiment of infantry besides his twelve hundred cavalry May 10. and a battery of horse-artillery, Cotton could not venture to attack until the infantry should come up. Meanwhile the infantry was behindhand. It had been designed that Trant's Portuguese on the Vouga should advance midway between the columns of Hill and Paget ; but Trant, finding this impracticable, had been obliged to pass the Vouga and the defiles beyond it, in order to leave room for Stewart's brigade to proceed. Stewart, however, was delayed by the breaking of some of his gun-carriages, and thus it was that Trant's troops were the first to join Cotton. Franceschi no sooner perceived the infantry than he drew off his troops, leaving a rear-guard of four squadrons, which was charged by the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, but escaped with trifling loss. The British halted at Oliveira, and the French commander was thus able to fall back almost unmolested upon Mermet's division on the heights of Grijo.

Hill's movement on the enemy's right was equally a failure. His brigade landed at Ovar precisely at the appointed hour ; but Franceschi, instead of retiring in disorder across his front, as had been expected, was holding Cotton at bay. Thereupon Hill, hearing that three battalions of Mermet's division were at Feira, not more than six miles distant, stood fast at Ovar, and sent his boats back to fetch Cameron's brigade. Mermet presently sent out the three battalions from Feira to check any movements upon Hill's part ; and there was some skirmishing between the two parties, until the appearance of the British Dragoons, following Franceschi, warned the French to retire lest they should be cut off ; when they too withdrew with little loss to Grijo.

With Paget's division, Hill's brigade and Cotton's cavalry, Wellesley could oppose fifteen hundred horse to the French twelve hundred, and seven thousand foot to the French four thousand. Early the next May 11. morning, therefore, he directed Hill to move along

1809. the road to Oporto and cut off the enemy's retreat,  
May 11. while he himself with the remainder of the force marched against the French front. Coming up to their position in the afternoon, Wellesley at once engaged them in front with the light companies of Stewart's brigade; but, meeting with a stubborn resistance, he presently detached the 16th Portuguese to engage the French right, and the King's German Legion to turn their left,<sup>1</sup> at the same time manœuvring with the remainder of Stewart's brigade and the cavalry against their front. On becoming aware of the turning movement Mermet at once retreated, sending the cavalry on in advance, and using the 31st Light Infantry for his rear-guard; for the ground was strongly enclosed. This regiment, however, was unskilfully handled by its colonel; and Charles Stewart, Wellesley's Adjutant-general, begged leave to send the two squadrons of the advanced guard, one from the Sixteenth and one from the Twentieth Light Dragoons, to attack them. The dragoons accordingly hastened down a narrow lane in single file, and galloped straight at the French infantry, who, though greatly superior in numbers, were so far demoralised by their colonel's bad leadership that they turned and ran away. About a hundred were taken prisoners, and, if the swordsmanship of the British dragoons had been better, the regiment would have been cut to pieces; but as usual the majority of the French escaped with a few bruises. The enemy then drew off without making further resistance than sufficed to assure their retreat. But meanwhile Hill's movement on the western flank had again miscarried; for, through defective work on the part of Wellesley's staff, Hill's column had crossed Trant's on the road, and the time thus wasted could not

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman (ii. 328) reverses the position of the two columns, sending the Portuguese to the French left, and the K.G.L. to their right; but Napier, Londonderry, and Leslie agree that Wellesley made his dispositions as I have set them down; so I doubt not that Mr. Oman's variation from these writers is merely a slip of the pen.

be made good. The loss of the British force in the whole affair was something over one hundred men.<sup>1</sup> That of the French can hardly have been less than twice as many.<sup>2</sup>

On that night the British encamped in the French tents at Grijó ; while Mermet and Franceschi continued their retreat until they had crossed the Douro into Oporto, when Soult broke down the bridge behind them. The Marshal had been roused to a sense of his danger on the 8th when Argenton, having been denounced by a general whom he had tried to gain over to the conspiracy, was arrested, and, upon the promise of pardon, confessed all that he knew. Soult made instant preparations for retreat through Traz-os-Montes, warned Loison to hold the bridge at Amarante at all costs, directed his outlying detachments in the north to march to that point, and, having collected all the boats on the Douro, resolved to maintain Oporto until the 12th in order to cover these various movements. In the city itself he had between eleven and twelve thousand men ; and his only fear was lest Wellesley should gather together the boats which had brought Hill's division from Aveiro to Ovar, and cross the Douro near its mouth. He therefore instructed his cavalry to patrol the lower part of the river most carefully, and kept his infantry in good quarters in the city ; feeling sure of several days' respite before Wellesley could find means of passing the river.

At two o'clock on the morning of the 12th the May 12.

<sup>1</sup> 2 officers and 19 men killed, 6 officers and 63 men wounded, 16 men missing.

<sup>2</sup> Tomkinson (*Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, pp. 7-9) and Fantin des Odoards (pp. 230-232) give an account of this attack of the cavalry at Grijó from the points of view of the charger and the charged. Londonderry in his account of the affair says that he led the attack—"Two squadrons being entrusted to me, we galloped forward in sections," etc. In the face of the details given by Tomkinson this is incredible. Londonderry can have led only the rear troops.

1809. British troops were roused by the noise of a loud  
May 12. explosion, proceeding (though they knew it not) from the destruction of the bridge of boats at Oporto. The army at once got under arms and presently advanced to Villa Nova, a suburb of Oporto on the south side of the Douro. Here the heads of the columns filled the steep narrow streets, while the remainder was massed in rear behind a rocky hill, crowned by the convent of Serra, which I shall call the Convent Hill. This hill stands in a convex bend of the river, and, being sufficiently high to mask all view of the upper waters from Oporto, completely concealed the British army from sight. Above this bend the Douro is shallow and rippling, having a breadth of full five hundred yards, and on the northern bank only is the shore steep and forbidding ; but from the convent of Serra downwards the stream, pent in between lofty cliffs on both sides, flows deep and silent past the city.

Soult, looking only for the approach of ships from the mouth of the river, had taken up his quarters in a house to west of Oporto, from which he could watch the lower reaches to the sea. Wellesley, from the convent one hundred and fifty feet above the river, could see columns of infantry forming up to the north-east of the town, which after a time moved off with a convoy, being Mermet's division escorting the sick and reserve of artillery towards Amarante ; but except down the stream he could perceive few guards or patrols. Over against him stood the bishop's Seminary, a large isolated building, unfinished but rising to the height of two low stories, and surrounded by a high wall<sup>1</sup> which extended to the river on each side. The enclosure within the walls was large enough to hold two battalions, and was commanded by the Convent Hill, from which guns could bring a flanking fire to bear upon every part of it except the northern face, whence an iron

<sup>1</sup> The remains of this wall may be still seen. The Seminary, when I saw it, was under repair, and had been raised to the height of three or four stories.

gate gave egress to a lane leading to the Vallongo road.<sup>1</sup> 1809.  
Officers had already been despatched to search the banks May 12.  
of the river, and Colonel Waters discovered a barber  
who had crossed the water in a skiff that morning.  
The barber pointed out four large barges unguarded  
on the northern shore; and Waters, with the help of  
the Prior of Amarante, who had volunteered his  
services, persuaded a few peasants to help him to  
secure these barges. They crossed the river accord-  
ingly, unperceived by any French patrol, and brought  
back the barges, Waters having ascertained at the same  
time that the Seminary was unoccupied by the French  
troops. The fact was duly reported to Wellesley, who  
answered briefly, "Well, let the men cross." At the  
same time three batteries were brought up to the  
Convent Hill, and Murray was detached with two  
squadrons of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, two guns,  
the First Line Battalion, and the massed riflemen of the  
German Legion to the ferry of Avintes, which though  
scathed had not been damaged beyond repair.<sup>2</sup>

A company of the Buffs was the first to embark;  
and when the first barge reached the shore an officer  
and twenty-five men hastened to occupy the Seminary  
and to close the iron gate on the northern side. The  
soldiers that followed lined the garden wall and prepared  
a banquette from which to fire over it. The barges  
returned and made a second trip unperceived; nor  
was it until they were taking over their third load,  
among whom was General Edward Paget, that shots  
were heard, when it became evident that the enemy had  
taken the alarm. Several officers of Mermet's division,  
it is said, observed red-coats on the southern bank  
and vessels passing the river, and reported it to their

<sup>1</sup> Napier represents the gate as actually abutting on the Vallongo road, and the British as firing, later on in the day, upon the French as they passed along that road. But so far as I can gather, the Vallongo road was eight hundred yards from the wall of the Seminary.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley's despatch would lead one to suppose that Murray's detachment had been sent away much earlier.

1809. commander ; but Mermet, scouting the idea as incredible,  
May 12. refused to verify the fact by reconnaissance and marched his divisions away. Soult himself, having sat up all night at work and being, moreover, unwell, had retired to bed rather before ten o'clock ; and his staff had just finished breakfast when an aide-de-camp came bounding up the stairs, four steps at a time, to report that the English were in the town. The emissary came from General Foy, who, while riding along the heights, had been informed at half-past ten that boats full of red-coats were passing the river. Foy at once galloped off to order a battery to post itself on the heights of the Chapel of Bom Fin, about seven hundred yards north of the Seminary, and to fetch the nearest regiment of French infantry, the 17th Light. Soult then sent word to him to hold the north-eastern outlet from the town at all costs until he himself could collect the remainder of the French troops in Oporto, and drive the British into the river.

It was, however, half-past eleven before the 17th could open their attack upon the northern and western sides of the Seminary, when some French guns also came down to the edge of the river to fire upon the barges. Then the British cannon opened fire, and the first round, a shrapnel shell, burst over the leading gun as it was in the act of unlimbering, dismounted it, and disabled every man and horse. The French gunners strove gallantly to stand by their pieces, but both they and the infantry on the western front of the Seminary were swept away by the terrific blast of Wellesley's batteries, and sought shelter in the neighbouring buildings. On the north front the attack was similarly repelled by the musketry of the British, who, under shelter of the wall, suffered little while punishing the assailants very severely. Paget indeed was disabled by a shot in the arm, but his place was taken by Hill ; while at every passage of the barges the red-coats gained an accession of strength from the remaining regiments, the Forty-eighth and Sixty-sixth, of Hill's

brigade. General Delaborde then came up with the 70th of the French Line, and opened a more formidable and persistent attack upon the building, but was also beaten off with heavy loss ; and Soult now ordered up Regnaud's brigade, which had been guarding the quays of the city and overawing the population. No sooner were these troops withdrawn than the people hurried down to the water's edge, launched the boats that had been secured on the northern bank, and paddled them over to the other side. Stewart's brigade then embarked, followed by the Guards ; and the Twenty-ninth, being the first to land, hastened up into the town through streets strewn with French baggage and lined with cheering inhabitants, whence they turned eastwards into the road which leads to Amarante.<sup>1</sup> Before they were clear of the houses they came upon the rear of the main French column in full retreat, and opened fire upon it, when the enemy made off in haste and confusion, abandoning a battery of artillery and several waggons. Their advance upon the flank of the French who were attacking the Seminary, caused these also to retire ; and Soult gave the word for a general retreat, leaving, however, a party on the heights that bordered the road in order to check pursuit. This rearguard was soon driven off ; and the British infantry, still led by the Twenty-ninth, hastened forward to the chase, taking scores of prisoners who were only too glad to surrender.

Murray meanwhile had passed his detachment slowly across the ferry at Avintes and advanced to the head of a ridge overlooking the road to Vallongo and Amarante. The whole of the French army came streaming across his front, a mere disorderly mob ; but the unhappy man, as useless and inefficient in Portugal as in India, simply stood and looked at them. It is true that his force was not large ; but he had with him at any rate from five to six hundred riflemen, for whom the wooded

<sup>1</sup> Leslie says "the main street," but this is hardly likely, for the regiment landed at the eastern end of the town, at the foot of a gully up which winds a road leading to the top of the town.



1809. ground that sloped down towards the road to Vallongo  
May 12. offered every advantage for an attack, even if the French had not been hopelessly demoralised. The last of the enemy had passed apparently two miles beyond him,<sup>1</sup> when General Charles Stewart, who had come to him with a message from Wellesley, caught up Murray's squadron of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, and galloped away with it. By his order the word was passed forward for the British infantry to open out, and Stewart with his handful of sabres in column of threes dashed through them down the road in a cloud of dust and came upon the rear of the enemy. Warned by the dust and the clatter the French commander had faced his rear-guard about in close order with bayonets fixed, and lined the walls for some distance on each side with sharp-shooters. Under the immediate command of Generals Foy and Delaborde the troops on the road stood firm until the horses were nearly upon them, when they broke and fled, and the dragoons, plunging into their midst, engaged them furiously with sword against bayonet. Delaborde was unhorsed and for a moment a prisoner; Foy received a sabre cut in the shoulder. But the Fourteenth had suffered heavily from the sharp-shooters; three out of four officers had been wounded; and out of fifty-two men in the leading troop, ten had been killed and eleven severely hurt. Hence it was only with difficulty that they could cut off and secure about three hundred prisoners.

Murray has been blamed by Napier and others for not supporting the dragoons, but he must have been too far away to do so efficiently, even if he had not received the order to halt. His chance had come earlier and he had failed to take it. The behaviour of the Fourteenth was most gallant, but the attack was foolhardy; and it may, I think, be asked, whether it was the Adjutant-general's business to take the command

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Hawker in his journal says that the squadron galloped for nearly two miles through the British infantry before it overtook the French.

of a squadron into his own hands and lead it away to 1809.  
fight upon his own account. Such interference is not May 12.  
calculated to commend the staff to the good feeling of  
regimental officers.

The loss of the French in the whole affair amounted to about three hundred killed and wounded and as many prisoners, irrespective of over a thousand men captured in the hospitals of Oporto. That of the British was trifling, twenty-three men killed, ninety-five men and three officers wounded, and two missing; and the very cheap price at which the success was won has tended, in spite of the praise of good soldiers, to belittle the skill and hazard of the operation. To effect a surprise in broad daylight; to force the passage of a deep and rapid river in the face of a veteran enemy with, at the outset, no more than a single boat, is an action that demands no ordinary measure of insight, nerve, and audacity in a commander. It has long been customary for the carpers at Wellesley's fame to reproach him with excessive caution; yet here in the first week of a campaign, in which the slightest mishap would have spelled professional ruin and evoked a storm of national indignation, he bearded so formidable an antagonist as Soult with the calm, phlegmatic order, "Well, let the men cross." Incidentally should be noticed one of Wellesley's most remarkable gifts—the astonishing eye for ground, which enabled him to realise in a moment that the passage, granted certain conditions, was actually feasible. As to Soult and his officers at large, it can only be said that their carelessness in the matter of watching the river and the boats was extraordinary, though it can be matched by some of the proceedings of the French army in Italy in 1806. For the Marshal there is some excuse in so far as he was in bad health; but the truth was that he despised his enemy, as indeed did every one of his brethren and the great Emperor himself, until convinced by bitter experience of the error. There is no greater danger for an army than to be the spoiled children of victory.

1809. The infantry continued the pursuit, after the  
May 12. Fourteenth had passed them, until the leading regiment was halted by Wellesley in person ; and indeed it should seem that firing did not cease until evening.<sup>1</sup> All through the night troops, artillery, baggage, and stores continued to pass the river, and what with these matters and the fatigues undergone by his army in the march of eighty miles from Coimbra, Wellesley could make no attempt to follow up his enemy until the afternoon of  
May 13. the 13th, when Murray's brigade was pushed out eastward as far as Vallongo,<sup>2</sup> and the remainder of the infantry was ordered to follow later. His purpose had been only to drive Soult's army from Portugal, and he could not divine that peculiar circumstances had given him the opportunity to annihilate it. Late on the 13th a report reached him that Soult had destroyed his artillery and retired to the northward ; but Wellesley was kept for twenty-four hours in suspense before he could verify the intelligence and decide upon the direction of his own march.<sup>3</sup> Soult, as a matter of fact, after dropping Franceschi's cavalry to protect his rear at Vallongo, had halted at night-fall of the 12th at Baltar, some twelve miles east of Oporto ; and there, having found some of his detached troops, and knowing Mermet's division to be within four miles of him, he judged himself to be safe from further molestation. A bad fall from his horse just before reaching Baltar, added to his previous illness, had so prostrated him that he retired to bed immediately after arrival at his quarters, only to be roused three hours before dawn by intelligence of appalling gravity.

Beresford, it will be remembered, had marched from Coimbra on the 6th of May, one day before the main army under Wellesley. On the 8th he had picked up Wilson's detachment at Vizeu, and on the

<sup>1</sup> Leslie, p. 114 ; Londonderry, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> Londonderry says that they were ready to march at dawn ; but Beamish, following the journals of the officers of the Legion, says that they marched in the afternoon.

<sup>3</sup> Wellesley to Murray, 13th, 14th May 1809.

10th he had joined Silveira at Lamego, thus increasing <sup>1809.</sup> his force to between ten and eleven thousand men, Portuguese and British. Ascertaining at Lamego that Loison had on the previous day been still in the neighbourhood of Amarante, Beresford resolved to block his path to eastward, and with that object ordered Silveira on the same day to cross the Douro at the bridge of Peso da Regoa about four miles to north. Silveira's troops had hardly passed the river before they encountered Loison moving eastward upon them from his last night's bivouac at Mezãozinho. Strong in the possession of a bridge-head on the northern side of the river, and in the assurance that Beresford was close at hand, Silveira fell back to the entrenchments and offered battle. Loison after some hesitation attacked him on the same afternoon, but, being beaten off, retired to Mezãozinho, and continued his retreat next day to Amarante, with Silveira, followed by Beresford, <sup>May 11.</sup> in hot pursuit. On the 12th Silveira drove the French <sup>May 12.</sup> rear-guard over the river, and the two forces took up each a strong position, the one on the east, the other on the west, of the Tamega, each of them being too weak to chase the other away. Loison, however, who had made no report to Soult for four days, resolved to withdraw, and on the evening of the 12th marched off on the road to Guimarães and Braga, deliberately sacrificing his chief's chosen line of retreat.

It was his messenger who came to Soult in the first hours of the 13th to tell the Marshal, as though it were <sup>May 13.</sup> of no great moment, that the road which he had proposed to follow through Traz-os-Montes was barred by the enemy at Amarante. The situation thus created for Soult could hardly have been worsened. His force was divided ; Loison with a full third of it being unable to join him except either by marching to Oporto, which was not to be thought of, or by retracing his steps towards Amarante, leaving Soult himself to be crushed between Wellesley on the west and Beresford on the east. It was hopeless to attack Wellesley, whose force

1809. was far superior in numbers ; little less hopeless to fall  
May 13. upon Beresford in so strong a position as that of Amarante, where Wellesley could come up upon the French rear. To the south the way was blocked by the Douro. Escape was possible only by retreat into the bleak mountains to northward ; and that retreat must be made speedily before his enemies had realised the position. Ill and shaken though he was, Soult reviewed his situation with perfect calmness, and took his decision.<sup>1</sup> A guide was found who knew of a rough track that led from the Souza over the mountains to the valley of the Ave, near Guimarães ; and by this track the Marshal resolved to extricate his army. He therefore destroyed his artillery, military chest, and baggage, loaded his horses with musket-ammunition and sick men, and set off on the 13th in pouring rain. On the following  
May 14. morning he regained communication with Loison, who was still at Guimarães ; and by the arrival of his last detachments from the north he saw his army once again reunited and twenty thousand strong. But even so his peril was still great. The only road northward which would carry vehicles led to Braga ; and there was reason to fear that Wellesley, on receiving information of his movements, would have marched to Braga before him. Soult therefore destroyed the guns, stores, and baggage of Loison, as he had already destroyed those of his own command, and plunging again into the mountains, made for the valley of the Cavado.

On the same day Wellesley, being finally assured that Soult had sacrificed his artillery and retreated northward, but being still uncertain whether the Marshal would go by Braga or by Chaves, ordered Beresford to make for the latter place, and Murray to move first to Penafiel and then either upon Braga or Chaves, according to what he might learn of the enemy's movements. He also marched himself in two columns with the main army for Braga, which he reached on the  
May 15. 15th. On the same day Murray reached Guimarães,

<sup>1</sup> S. Chamans, p. 147.

having hurried on nearly all night from Penafiel in the vain hope of surprising the French there. Beresford, meanwhile, on finding that Amarante was abandoned, had of his own initiative marched on the 13th for Chaves, detaching Silveira due north to occupy the defiles of the Serra da Cabreira at Salamonde and Ruivães, on the road from Braga to Chaves. Meanwhile Soult, on the evening of the 14th, after a wretched march, had reached the village of Pavao de Lanhoso, about eight miles east of Braga. On the 15th he sent patrols down the road to see whether or not the British were in Braga; and, learning that his men had been met by British dragoons, turned about to reascend the valley of the Cavado, himself taking personal command of the rear-guard. All day the rain poured down, and at nightfall the weary French reached Salamonde. Here the Marshal learned that his progress was barred by the partial destruction of a bridge, known as the Ponte Nova, which carried the road over a tributary of the Cavado; a body of Portuguese militia having torn up the wooden floor and balustrades, and entrenched themselves on the farther side. Soult thereupon sent for a certain Major Dulong of the 31st Light, and entrusted to him the duty of regaining the passage of the river. Dulong called for volunteers from his own regiment, crossed, in the darkness of night and in a heavy storm, the two slippery beams on which the flooring had been laid, surprised the Portuguese asleep in their shelters beyond, and killed or dispersed the whole of them. The bridge was then hastily repaired with such material as could be found; and at eight o'clock in the morning of the 16th the army began with difficulty to file over it. But so slow was its progress that Soult left a brigade of infantry and two regiments of cavalry in a strong position in his rear, with orders to maintain it at all costs until the main body should have crossed the Ponte Nova.

Some miles beyond this obstacle was another not less formidable. From Ruivães onward Soult had a choice

1809. of two roads, the one leading east upon Chaves, the  
May 16. other north-east to Montalegre. The former was the easier ; but, in view of the danger that Beresford might reach Chaves before him, Soult decided to take the latter. The advanced guard, however, after following it for some distance, found that the passage over the river Misarella was also obstructed by armed peasants. The torrent itself flows in a deep ravine, and was crossed by a bridge of a single arch which, from its bold leap from bank to bank, was known as the *Saltador*. This bridge should have been broken down or held in real force ; but Silveira had not appreciated the importance of securing it, nor even of occupying the defile of Ruivães. It was, indeed, only through the energy of Major Warre, of Beresford's staff, that the raw levies had been collected at the *Saltador*, for he had not the means to destroy the bridge, even if he could have persuaded the reluctant peasants to sacrifice it. The *Saltador*, however, was covered by earth-works and abatis ; and Loison saw that, if disaster were to be averted, the passage must be carried at once. For the second time Major Dulong was sent for, who, at the head of eight or nine hundred men, formed in column of fours, made a determined rush at the bridge, and, bearing down all resistance by sheer weight and impetus, sent the frightened peasants flying to the hills. Dulong himself was wounded, but few of his men were injured, and thus the way to Montalegre was cleared.

This deliverance was wrought none too soon. Since half-past one the British dragoons had been exchanging shots with Soult's rear-guard ; and at five o'clock Sir Arthur Wellesley's main column, headed by the Guards, came up to support them. Unlimbering two three-pounders in the road, Wellesley opened fire upon the French centre, sent the light companies of the Guards to turn their left, and launched the rest against their front. Instantly the whole mass of the French turned and ran back, cavalry and infantry throwing down their arms and struggling for the foremost place in the flight. So

thoroughly were they demoralised by the hunger and distress of the retreat that one of the best regiments in their army, the 4th Light, broke as readily as the rest. The direction taken by the fugitives not being at once perceived, they had time to rally ; but upon the approach of the Guards they again took to their heels, and reached the bridge as a mere panic-stricken mob. The parapets having been destroyed, scores of men, horses, and mules were thrust over into the torrent, which was presently choked with mangled corpses ; while the British guns, which soon afterwards came up, opened fire with ghastly effect upon the seething mass. But for the early fall of night under the eternal clouds of rain, this rear-guard could hardly have escaped annihilation.

On the following night the French army reached Montalegre, and found it deserted by the inhabitants. Little food and shelter was to be obtained there ; and on the 18th Soult, though now unpursued, still urged his troops forward<sup>1</sup> through the desolate mountains, till at last on the 19th he entered Orense. Here again the inhabitants had fled, leaving few victuals behind them ; but a day's halt in a safe refuge and the sight of a fertile country did much to reinvigorate the army. Finding that Lugo was still occupied by two regiments of Ney's corps, Soult continued his march thither, and on the 23rd entered the town, dispersing some thousands of peasants who had long held Ney's helpless garrison blockaded and in near peril of starvation. He brought back with him not far short of twenty thousand men, from which it would appear that his campaign in

<sup>1</sup> Though the cases of Moore's and of Soult's retreats are not exactly parallel, it is worth noting how both of them, good and experienced soldiers, drove their men on by forced marches at times when, to the critic in the arm-chair, there seems to be no reason for haste. It may be questioned whether any man, soldier or civilian, has the right to criticise the action of a general in such circumstances, unless he has passed through the like experience. The leadership of an army at such crises, turns less upon military than upon psychological considerations.



1809. Portugal had cost him in all close upon six thousand dead or captured, of whom more than a third had been lost in the retreat from Baltar to Orense,<sup>1</sup> very many of them massacred, after refinements of torture, by the peasants. These twenty thousand men were without guns, stores, ammunition, baggage, or treasure; in many cases they were without arms, without shoes, and with clothing in tatters; but still Soult had brought them back, and this was no small credit to him. Though the extreme peril from which he rescued his army can only be ascribed to his blunders and omissions in the previous weeks, yet he redeemed many shortcomings by the firmness and courage with which he faced a desperate situation. Many comparisons have been instituted between his retreat to Orense and that of Moore to Coruña, which latter was held at the time to be fully avenged by the Marshal's discomfiture. But there was this broad difference between the two, that the British were rather mutinous from disappointment of their wish for a fight than demoralised by failure. Soult's troops were disheartened and even cowed. Both armies degenerated in great measure into mobs, but Moore's was at least a fighting, whereas Soult's was a flying mob.

On the whole the Marshal was lucky to escape as he did. Wellesley had been delayed, as we have seen, by the imperative need for transporting the immediate necessities of his army across the Douro. Silveira had lost his way, or neglected to obey his orders, for he did not reach Ruivães till the 17th, and then only by way of Montalegre; arriving, moreover, too late to intercept Soult at the latter place, and making no effort to pursue him. Beresford, in spite of the brilliant inspiration which made him anticipate Wellesley's wishes, had missed his prey chiefly through the exhaustion of his troops by hunger and fatigue.<sup>2</sup> His column reached

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Oman's calculations, ii. 361.

<sup>2</sup> He blamed, in private, General Tilson, who was sulky at being attached to his army instead of Wellesley's, for his failure to accom-

Chaves late on the night of the 16th, but his men were too weary to proceed over eighteen more mountainous miles to Montalegre. The British cavalry of Wellesley's column did indeed follow up Soult's on the 17th and 18th; and on the latter day Wellesley's headquarters were actually at Montalegre. Beresford also sent forward some of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons as far as Ginzo even on the 19th; but none of these parties were strong enough to break in upon Soult's rear-guard, and they accomplished little beyond the capture of stragglers. For the infantry to have attempted pursuit with any hope of success would have been impossible except, as Wellesley said,<sup>1</sup> by making sacrifices as great as those of the enemy. Already the men were on short rations of bread;<sup>2</sup> many of them were barefooted; and sickness was increasing among them from exposure to incessant rain. He had no transport; and, where Frenchmen starved, it was not likely that British troops would find food. He could hardly hope to overtake and destroy the French army completely; and, moreover, his original plan had been more than accomplished by the expulsion of the French with very heavy loss from the north of Portugal.

There remained now the more important work of dealing with Victor. On the 18th the English General received intelligence that a strong body of French had captured the bridge of Alcantara, and advanced into Portugal as far as Castello Branco, an occurrence which had reduced General Mackenzie to a state of extreme nervousness. Wellesley set out forthwith for the Tagus, leaving his men to follow. The march southward was delayed by the want of shoes, but the head of the army reached Oporto on the 22nd of May, and Coimbra on the

May 22.   
 plish more. "Had not Tilson lost me one day, I should have driven Loison from Amarante on the 12th, and could then have been ahead of Soult and separated him from Loison." Tilson on the 11th asked to be relieved from his command (Beresford to Wellesley, 11th, 17th May 1809, *Wellington MSS.*).

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Castlereagh, 18th May 1809.

<sup>2</sup> *Wellington Supplementary Despatches*, vi. 262.

1809. 27th ; and by the second week in June the whole was assembled at Abrantes. Before pursuing Wellesley's exploits further, however, it will be necessary to glance again at the movements of the French armies at large in the Peninsula.

## CHAPTER XXIX

ZARAGOZA had fallen, it will be remembered, on the 20th 1809. of February, and its fall signified not only the annihilation for the time being of the Spanish army of Aragon, but the release of the Third and Fifth French Corps, under Junot and Mortier, for service in the field. The two Marshals accordingly, as soon as their troops had recovered from the hardships of the siege, began to sweep the whole of Aragon with movable columns, Mortier taking, roughly, the north and Junot the south of the Ebro. Since the only Spanish force that survived was a single division of about four thousand men under the Marquis of Lazan, the French met at first with little resistance. Even the inaccessible fortress of Jaca, commanding one of the passes into the Pyrenees, surrendered without an attempt at defence. Farther to the south Monzon and Fraga, in the valley of the Cinca, were likewise occupied without the firing of a shot; though Mequinenza on the Segre, which was protected only by antiquated and ruinous fortifications, resolutely rejected Mortier's summons. When, however, the Marshal detached a regiment of cavalry into Catalonia to open communications with St. Cyr, the spirit of the Catalans showed itself unmistakably. The regiment by great good fortune made its way successfully to Chabot's division of St. Cyr's army at Montblanch, a little to north of Tarragona; but, when it attempted to return to Mortier, it was so resolutely attacked by the *somatenes* that it was obliged to abandon the endeavour and attach itself permanently to Chabot. Junot in like manner

1809. encountered little opposition on the lower ground. One of his columns occupied Caspe and Alcañiz on the river Guadelope without difficulty ; but those which entered the mountains to southward, finding a deserted and foodless country before them, and insurgents manœuvring upon their flanks, were compelled to retire, not without experiencing sundry little reverses.

April. So matters stood at the end of March, when Napoleon, realising that war with Austria was inevitable, gave orders on the 2nd of April that Mortier's corps should be concentrated and drawn back to Burgos,<sup>1</sup> in readiness to march into France if required. Three days later he also removed Junot from the command of the Third Corps and appointed General Suchet to succeed him.<sup>2</sup> By the fourth week in April, therefore, Junot, who had not yet been replaced by Suchet, was left alone to do with his one corps the work which had already proved enough, if not too much, for two. The Aragonese, noting the weakness and dispersion of the Marshal's troops, took advantage of it to inflict a number of petty defeats, culminating in the capture of a small column of a

May 19. thousand men near Monzon on the 19th of May. At the same time another of Junot's brigades was forced back from its position at Alcañiz by Lazan's division, which had been increased to a strength of eight or nine thousand men by levies from Valencia and placed under the command of General Blake. Further recruits were raising in Valencia, and altogether the prospect before Suchet, when on the 19th of May he took over command of the Third Corps from Junot at Zaragoza, was not exhilarating. His troops, nominally twenty thousand strong, could muster little more than ten thousand effective men. Their clothing was of all sorts and kinds ; their pay was in arrear ; they had no magazines nor depots ; they hardly knew whither to turn for

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 14,991. The story that Mortier went to Burgos as a compromise between Napoleon's order to go to Logroño, and Joseph's to go to Valladolid (*Corres. du Roi Joseph*, vi. 99), would seem, therefore, to be doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 15,009.

food ; and they were demoralised by failure and mis- 1809.  
management.

However, Blake was advancing, and Suchet thought it imperative to take the offensive at all costs. Marching, therefore, on the 21st, he came on the 23rd upon Blake drawn up in position at Alcañiz with some nine thousand men and eighteen guns, having the river Guadelope and May 23. its one bridge in his rear. Though slightly weaker in numbers, Suchet attacked and was repelled with a loss of seven or eight hundred men ; his troops showing little spirit, and indeed succumbing to a disgraceful panic in the retreat which followed the action. By this defeat the French were compelled to call in all their outlying posts, while the insurgents, gathering courage, threatened both Zaragoza and Tudela. Within three weeks Blake had increased his force to twenty-five thousand men ; and with these on the 12th of June he marched north-west- June 12. ward through the mountains by Belchite to Villanueva on the Huerba, thus threatening Suchet's line of communication between Zaragoza and Tudela. Finally, he moved down the valley of the Huerba in two columns, pushing the right-hand column of six thousand men under General Areizaga to Botorita, some twelve miles from Zaragoza on the east bank of the river ; and leading fourteen thousand under his own command to Maria, some two miles nearer Zaragoza on the west bank. Thus the two divisions lay about three miles apart on opposite sides of the Huerba, with no bridge to connect them. Accordingly, on the 15th, Suchet June 15. marched out from Zaragoza, and leaving three thousand men to check any movement by Areizaga, led the remainder, numbering under nine thousand, against Blake. Delaying his attack, however, until three thousand men, whom he was expecting from Tudela, should have come up, he reduced Blake to such impatience that the Spanish General imprudently descended from his position to take the offensive, and was defeated with the loss of a full third of his force and of nearly all his guns. He retired, however, in good order, joined Areizaga on the

1809. same evening, and next day retreated along the road  
June 16. by which he had advanced, to Belchite. Here with a  
June 18. foolish temerity he again offered battle, though from  
the desertion of his levies and his previous losses he  
could now oppose only twelve thousand beaten men  
to Suchet's thirteen thousand. The result was that  
Blake's troops turned and ran at the first onset, and  
that in an absurdly short time his whole army had been  
dispersed. Thus, though the guerilla-bands still defied  
them from the mountains both to north and south, the  
French regained a firm hold upon the lowlands of  
Aragon. Had Blake shown a little patience, or had  
he for once resisted his overpowering mania for dividing  
his force, he would have compelled Suchet's army to  
evacuate Zaragoza in shame and discouragement ; and  
might have wrecked the whole of the French campaign  
of 1809.

Thus fared the war in the east of the Peninsula ;  
let us now return to the west with which the British  
army is more directly concerned. In Galicia, ever since  
Soult started upon his march to Portugal, Marshal Ney  
had been engaged in a hopeless attempt to suppress  
the general insurrection of that province. He en-  
deavoured to overawe the people by scouring the  
country with small columns ; but he could effect little  
beyond burning the villages, while the peasants took  
their revenge by murdering every straggler, marauder  
or forager whom they could cut off. And the number  
of these unhappy victims was great ; for an army which  
lives on the country must, when that country is poor,  
disperse its small parties in all directions to find food  
to eat. Nevertheless, Ney was faithfully obeying his  
master's instructions, as conveyed to him from Paris,<sup>1</sup>  
for Napoleon could not grasp the fact that every able-  
bodied Galician was in arms against him. To the  
Emperor the whole matter was simple enough. Ney  
was to select and guard a few towns as bases of

<sup>1</sup> Berthier to Ney, 18th Feb. 1809. *Corres. du Roi Joseph*,  
vi. 56.

operations, send out flying columns from these, subdue and disarm the northern half of the province first, hand it over to the Spanish authorities to maintain order, and proceed to deal with the southern half in like manner. With forty or fifty thousand men this plan might have succeeded, but Ney had only seventeen thousand, and was helpless. Yet quite early in March the Emperor was asking why Ney had not taken the province of Asturias.<sup>1</sup>

In April the Galician insurgents were aided by a semblance of a regular force, namely the remnant of the army under Romana, which had retreated with Moore. Starting with six thousand men from Puebla de Senabria, he crossed the mountains to Ponferrada, where he arrived on the 18th of March and found that no French were nearer to him than at Villafranca and Astorga, both of which were completely isolated. Falling, therefore, on the next day upon Villafranca by surprise, he received the surrender of a battalion of six hundred fighting men, and of some hundreds of invalids and stragglers who had likewise drifted into the town. Then taking only one regiment with him he pursued his way to Oviedo, leaving General Mahy in charge of the remainder, with orders to hold the upper valley of the Sil for as long as possible, but, if seriously threatened, to retire into Asturias. At Oviedo, Romana bearded the Junta, which with the usual blindness and selfishness had scattered the Asturian army along the frontier of the province, without a thought of aid to Galicia; and after a stormy discussion he called in the troops, swept the Junta out of existence, and installed a new one of his own nomination. This done, he sent clothing, ammunition, and stores from the resources of Asturias to equip his army on the Sil.

Romana lingered on at Oviedo, however, till May; and meanwhile formidable preparations against Asturias were going forward in Madrid. Much alarmed by the

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Joseph, 6th March 1809. *Corres. de Napoléon*, 14,861.



1809. cessation of all news from Ney, owing to the capture  
May. of Villafranca, King Joseph and the chief of his staff resolved that communication with him must be re-established at all costs. There were few troops at hand for the purpose except Mortier's corps, which had been ordered by Napoleon to Burgos; but by dint of much entreaty Joseph obtained leave to move this corps as far as Valladolid, to give a general support to the enterprise; and a force of seven to eight thousand men was further scraped together and placed under the command of General Kellermann. Assembling these troops at Astorga, Kellermann moved to Villafranca, unmolested except by the harassing tactics of the peasants, and thence to Lugo, where he found a division of Ney's infantry and the chief of the Marshal's staff, who had come to concert operations against Romana. It was then agreed that Ney should concentrate the bulk of his corps at Lugo and attack the Asturians from the west; while Kellermann, returning to Leon, should enter the country by the pass of Pajares on the south, and General Bonnet with his division at Santander should close in upon them from the east.

Wholly unaware of this movement, Romana left his troops dispersed; he himself being with two regiments at Oviedo; Ballesteros in observation of Bonnet at Santander; Mahy, who had retreated before Kellermann, at Navia de Suarna on the Ser; and four thousand Asturians under a Swiss general, Worster, some fifty miles north of him at Castropol. The result could not fail to be disastrous. Ney, after leaving garrisons at Santiago, Coruña, Ferrol, Betanzos and Lugo, advanced nearly due east through the heart of the mountains upon Navia de Suarna, from which Mahy, unable to resist him, retreated westward to the upper waters of the Minho. Disdaining to follow him, the Marshal pressed on north-  
May 18. eastward upon Oviedo, and on the 18th of May lay ten miles north of that city on the river Nora. Romana with his handful of men made a futile effort to defend the passage of the stream, but being of course defeated,

fled to Gijon and took refuge in a Spanish ship-of-war. On the 19th Ney occupied Oviedo; and on the 20th he entered Gijon, where he captured a quantity of ammunition and stores lately landed from England; while simultaneously a detachment seized the port of Aviles. On the 21st Kellermann, having forced the pass of Pajares with little difficulty, joined hands with him at Lena; and Bonnet also presently appeared at Oviedo, having followed the coast-road from the east, but without encountering, much less overthrowing, Ballesteros. For the latter, hearing of the successes of Ney and Kellermann, had sought safety in the mountains at Covadonga, from thirty to forty miles east of Oviedo.

But though the three French columns had duly converged upon the Asturian capital, they had beaten but two, and those the least important, out of the four bodies of Spanish troops; and the remainder speedily made their presence felt. In Asturias itself, for it will be convenient to finish what remains to be said of that province, Ballesteros on the 24th started back by mountainous paths for Santander, and surprised the place on the morning of the 10th of June. The bulk of the garrison escaped; but Ballesteros captured two hundred of them, besides four hundred invalids in the hospital, the whole of Bonnet's stores and munitions, and £10,000 in cash. Lingering, however, too long in Santander, he was attacked in his turn on the 12th by Bonnet, who had hastened back on hearing of his movements, and was completely defeated. He himself escaped by sea, but three thousand of his men were taken and the remainder dispersed. None the less he had forced Bonnet to quit Asturias, and Bonnet's example was presently followed by the remainder of the French forces. General Kellermann, who had been left at Oviedo by Ney to complete the subjugation of the province, was shortly afterwards commanded by King Joseph to restore to Mortier a division which he had borrowed from the Fifth Corps for the Asturian expedition. He duly obeyed orders; but feeling

1809. rightly that his force, thus weakened, would lie in dangerous isolation at Oviedo, he recrossed the pass of Pajares, and by the third week in June had returned to Leon. The combined movement of the French upon Asturias had proved a complete failure.

Ney himself had left Oviedo on the 22nd of May by the coast-road for Galicia, hoping to encounter and defeat Worster on the way; but that cautious commander withdrew into the mountains and lay still while the French passed him by. On the 27th of May Ney reached Castropol, where he received alarming news from two quarters. Mahy, finding himself unwatched, had marched with six thousand men against Lugo, where he held the garrison so straitly confined that he would probably have forced it to surrender, had  
May 22. he not been driven off on the 22nd by the unexpected appearance of Soult's starving and demoralised army from Orense. Worse than this, on the 22nd of May Brigadier Carrera had marched with ten thousand fairly organised and disciplined insurgents upon Santiago, totally defeated General Maucune's garrison, which came out to meet them, with a loss of six hundred men and two guns, and driven the French back in disorder  
May 24. upon Coruña. Two days later Romana, who had landed at Ribadeo, rejoined Mahy and his army at Villalba, about twenty miles north of Lugo, and slipping past Soult's corps made his way to Orense, from whence, opening communication with Carrera, he was able to present a front for the defence of Southern Galicia.

Leaving a part of his army to watch this force, Ney  
May 30. betook himself with the rest on the 30th to Lugo, to concert further operations with Soult. His arrival was the signal for a bitter quarrel between the troops of the two Marshals. Though he could hardly refuse to re-equip Soult's corps for the field, so far as he was able, Ney reserved all comforts for his own men. Cruel taunts were levelled by Ney's more fortunate soldiers against their humiliated and disreputable-seeming comrades from Portugal, with the result that bloody

encounters took place between parties of men, leading 1809. to duels between their officers, until finally there was great danger lest the two armies should engage in a pitched battle.<sup>1</sup> This enmity, whether originated or only shared by their chiefs, was by none felt more bitterly than by Ney and Soult; for not only were they furiously jealous of each other, but diametrically at variance over their future plans. Ney, having received orders to subjugate Galicia, considered not only that it was his duty to obey them, but Soult's to help him to do so. Soult, on the other hand, having had no very pleasant experience of that mountainous province, was anxious to move down into the plains. Nor were his reasons without great force. In the first place, he was anxious to proceed to Zamora to pick up a convoy of clothing and other stores, which he had requested from Madrid; in the second, he held that the principal business of the French armies was to drive the British out of the Peninsula, and that all other operations should be subordinated to this grand object. If the Second and Sixth Corps were to devote themselves entirely to Romana, as Ney suggested, Wellesley would be free to march with superior forces either against Mortier at Valladolid, or against Victor on the Tagus. But, by joining Mortier on the Douro, Soult could at once pick up his convoy and menace any advance of Wellesley, whether along that river or along the Tagus. Still Ney was stiff for his own opinion, and the contention between the two Marshals grew so hot that Ney is said to have drawn his sword upon Soult. At length, however, Soult yielded, with or without sincerity; and it was agreed that Ney should advance with his corps, about fifteen thousand men, from Coruña upon Santiago and push Romana southward, while Soult, descending from Lugo to Orense and closing in upon him from the east, should drive him into the sea.

Accordingly on the 1st of June Soult, having June 1. previously sent from two to three thousand dismounted

<sup>1</sup> *St. Chamans*, p. 150; *Fantín des Odoards*, pp. 240-241.

1809. cavalry and isolated units into Astorga, marched with about seventeen thousand men southward by Monforte, where he halted for a week to bring up his stores and scour the valleys on his flanks. Ney meanwhile arrived
- June 5. before Santiago on the 5th. The Spanish commander, General Noroña, upon the news of his approach, fell back some forty miles to southward and took post behind the river Oitlaben, where his right flank was protected by the Sierra de Suido, and his left by the sea. Over the river on his front there were but four passages, namely, a ford on the estuary, open only at low tide for three hours, and both broad and difficult; the bridge of San Payo, just above the tidal water, of which the Spanish general had broken four arches; a second bridge—that of Candelas—six miles higher up, which, though not broken, had been barricaded and was further defended by entrenchments and batteries; and a second ford just above the bridge, and commanded equally with it by the Spanish cannon. To protect his left still further, Noroña had obtained seamen from the British frigates at Vigo to man gunboats for the patrolling of the estuary, while the marines of the British squadron and sixty stragglers of Moore's army were set ashore to garrison Vigo itself, which lies about eight miles down the bay from the mouth of the Oitlaben. Such was the position in which Noroña with ten thousand men, three-fourths of them peasants, faced Ney with about the same number of veterans; but the Spanish commander had not only the wit to choose a good station and to make the most of it, but also the far rarer gift of persuading his raw and impetuous levies to retire patiently to it, without risking defeat in the open field.
- June 7. On the 7th of June Ney reached the Oitlaben, and opened an aimless cannonade upon the Spaniards, while his cavalry searched for the means of passing the river. Failing to find any, but hoping that Soult's advance from Orense would render the position untenable,
- June 8. he, on the 8th, attempted to force the passage of the river at both fords, and was repulsed with some loss.

On that same evening he learned that Soult was still 1809.  
halted at Monforte, whereupon, feeling convinced that  
his brother Marshal had betrayed him, Ney on the  
following day retreated upon Pontevedra and Santiago. June 9.  
Soult's troops, meanwhile, who had not tasted a full  
meal for months, continued to enjoy the abundant  
supplies<sup>1</sup> of Monforte until the 10th, when their com- June 10.  
mander, protesting that Marshal Ney must have changed  
his plans, marched away eastward along the valley of  
the Sil, crossed that river at the natural bridge of  
Montefurado, and on the 12th reached Larouco, a day's June 12.  
journey to southward. Here he received a letter from  
Ney, dated the 10th, recounting his failure at San Payo  
and calling upon Soult to come to his aid. Soult's  
answer, which did not reach Ney until the 21st, was to  
the effect that he had fulfilled his part of the agreement,  
that his troops were unfitted through fatigue and want  
for any further operations, and that he would not turn  
back. With that he continued his progress south to  
Puebla de Senabria, and from thence to Benavente, July 1.  
where he halted part of his force and proceeded with the  
rest to his long-sought goal of Zamora.

It seems to be true that there was hardly a pair of  
boots in his army during the march, some of the men  
going barefoot, others swathing their feet with rags,  
with bark, and finally, by the Marshal's own preaching  
and example, with pieces of raw hide, the hair turned  
outward. None the less it appears certain that Soult  
broke his word to Ney, and, indeed, that he gave his  
word without any intention of keeping it. Ney, bitterly  
incensed at the reply sent to him from Larouco, evacuated  
Ferrol and Coruña on the day following its receipt, and June 22.  
assembled his army at Lugo, from which point he retired  
by Villafranca to Astorga, sacking and burning in blind  
fury as he passed through the country.

Thus was wrought the deliverance of Galicia from  
the yoke of France. It is, I think, too much to say  
with the Spanish historian that it was due wholly to the

<sup>1</sup> *Fantín des Odoards*, p. 242.

1809. patriotic feeling and religious fervour of the Galicians.<sup>1</sup> Nothing of course is easier than to ascribe it to the dissensions of Soult and Ney, and to maintain that, if Napoleon had been in Joseph's place at Madrid, matters would have gone very differently. But, on the other hand, nothing can be more certain than that Napoleon would have taken the view of Soult and made the destruction, or expulsion, of the British army his chief care. The British army, in fact, from its first landing had been the disturbing factor in all of Napoleon's calculations. At the outset, as has been well pointed out,<sup>2</sup> it was a strategical blunder in him to attempt to hold Galicia at all, before Portugal, and in particular Lisbon, had been conquered; and this blunder was due wholly to Moore's march upon Sahagun, without which the corps of Soult and Ney would never have found themselves in so remote a corner of the Peninsula. And here may be noticed the silent pressure of British naval supremacy upon Napoleon's operations at large. Moore's army had disembarked at two different ports three hundred miles apart; it had drawn the flower of Napoleon's troops headlong to the sea, re-embarked at two ports over eighty miles apart, and left the pursuers chafing upon the strand. It is no wonder that, when an unforeseen operation had brought a large proportion of his army within easy reach of Coruña, Ferrol and Vigo, Napoleon should have embraced the chance of closing these ports to the British fleet. Thus insensibly he was led to prescribe to Ney's corps the occupation of Galicia; and, through the wisdom that comes after the event, it is manifest that this meant a fatal division of force; for if Ney's corps and Soult's had invaded Portugal together, they must have compelled Cradock to embark, and would have captured Lisbon.

It is of course true that, according to Napoleon's

<sup>1</sup> See *Arteche*, vi. 198.

<sup>2</sup> I would refer the reader to Mr. Oman, ii. pp. 390-404, and in particular to the closing pages for an admirably lucid account of the last campaign in Galicia, and of the influence of the British army upon the course of events.

plan, Victor was to have advanced upon Lisbon from <sup>1809.</sup> the east, while Soult descended upon it from the north ; but this eccentric combination was a very sorry substitute for the advance of a single solid body in overwhelming force whether from north or east. And, in fact, before the combination could take effect, the British army, which had vanished at Coruña, reappeared at Lisbon and dealt the invaders from the north such a buffet as sent them reeling back. Beyond doubt the activity of the Galician insurgents, by keeping Ney fully employed, facilitated Wellesley's task not a little ; and, even if it had not done so, no Englishman will withhold his homage from their noble and heroic spirit. But the part played by the British troops cannot be ignored. Soult may have been jealous, self-seeking, disloyal to his great master ; but, in considering Galicia as a trifling matter compared with Wellesley's army, he was absolutely right. In the immediate future there was the danger lest the British General might defeat Victor and drive King Joseph from Madrid. Looking farther forward, it was certain that, if Spain were to be subjugated, the redcoats must not merely be defeated, but crushed, overwhelmed, annihilated, in such sort that no British Minister would dare to send an army to the Peninsula again. Otherwise, as fast as they were driven out by one port they would re-enter by another, drawing away the French troops continually to the greatest possible distance from headquarters at Madrid, and giving the peasants free play against the lines of communication.

It remains to tell the further proceedings of Marshal Victor since we left him at Merida, victorious over Cuesta at Medellin, but unwilling to move farther until he should have received news of Soult. It should seem that the Marshal was well content to wait, for he remained perfectly inactive, while Cuesta, who had been commended rather than the contrary by the Supreme Junta for his defeat, collected, by the help of levies from Granada and a division of Cartaojal's force, a new



1809. army of twenty thousand foot and three thousand horse.

Victor went so far as to summon Badajoz, but made no attempt to besiege it; and, even after the division of

April 19. Lapisse had joined him, he remained still perfectly supine until the beginning of May. At that time there appeared at Alcantara a battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion with another battalion of Portuguese militia and a few cavalry and guns, in all about two thousand men under Colonel Mayne, which had been pushed forward by Wellesley in advance of Mackenzie's corps of observation. Conceiving this to be the vanguard of a Portuguese army marching to co-operate with Cuesta, Victor on the 11th of May marched against Alcantara with a brigade of cavalry and a division of

May 14. infantry, and on the 14th made his attack. Mayne had barricaded and mined the great Roman bridge, and, having also constructed trenches on the northern side, made a stout resistance for three hours, until his militia were driven from their shelter by the fire of the French artillery. He then sprang the mine, but the charge was too small to destroy the Roman masonry, and Victor succeeded in forcing the passage, when Mayne retreated in good order, having lost close upon three hundred killed, wounded and taken. After three days' stay Victor retired, being unable to find victuals for his detachment even for this short period in so inhospitable a neighbourhood. His advance, as we have seen, had profoundly disquieted Mackenzie; but Wellesley had divined the true purport of the movement as a mere reconnaissance in force, designed to obtain intelligence of Soult's movements.<sup>1</sup> On learning of Victor's retreat Mayne again marched forward and reoccupied Alcantara.

During Victor's absence Cuesta had seized the opportunity to make an attack upon Merida; but though this was easily repulsed, the Marshal was growing exceedingly nervous as to his situation. The country between the Guadiana and the Tagus was

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Mackenzie, 21st May 1809.

exhausted ; his sick numbered two thousand and were rapidly increasing ; the men were on half rations, and demoralised by starvation and by their seemingly aimless employment in a deserted district. Moreover, though he did not mention this, his battalions were weakened by the detachment of a number of men, whom some of his generals had taken from their duty and were employing as shepherds to drive merino sheep for their private advantage.<sup>1</sup> Victor therefore asked for leave to retire northward across the Tagus to the region of Plasencia, where his troops might be able at least to subsist. He recognised that Cuesta would retake Merida and Truxillo as soon as his back was turned ; but, if the French army wheeled about to meet him, Cuesta would at once retire, and the result would be only useless fatigue and augmented demoralisation. Yet, unless supplied with provisions, he would be driven from his cantonments by sheer lack of food. King Joseph answered these complaints by promising to send a supply of biscuit, and urging Victor to advance again to Alcantara in order to make a diversion in favour of Soult. But to this the Marshal replied on the 8th of June that the bridge of Alcantara had been destroyed, and that, unless he received orders to withdraw his army within a week, he should be compelled to lead it on some desperate service to save it from total dissolution. Two days later Joseph had heard, not directly from Soult but through the Minister of War at Paris, the intelligence of Wellesley's passage of the Douro and of Soult's retreat. Alive to the serious import of this news he at length yielded to Victor's remonstrances, and authorised him to retire to Almaraz and Plasencia. Accordingly after rendering useless the bridges of Medellin and Merida over the Guadiana, Victor evacuated Estremadura between the 14th and 19th of June, crossed the Tagus at Almaraz, destroyed the bridge of boats at that place, and having lingered for a few days by the river, withdrew, driven

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. du Roi Joseph*, vi. 198.

1809. by sheer starvation, on the 26th to the Alberche, where  
June 26. he posted his advanced guard at Talavera.<sup>1</sup>

This movement was part of a general plan of concentration, in view of the serious tidings from the Douro. Joseph naturally had expected Soult to retreat through Traz-os-Montes, and therefore ordered Mortier to move to Salamanca to support him ; but, on learning later that Soult had joined Ney and would ultimately appear at Zamora, he bade Mortier tarry at Valladolid, and made his dispositions upon the assumption that Ney would remain in Galicia. For the last fortnight of June Joseph was absolutely without news either of Soult or of Ney ; nor was it until the 3rd of July that he learned what had become of them. By that time, as we have seen, four of the French corps in the Peninsula had drifted, rather by accident than by design, into the following positions. Ney with the Sixth Corps was at Astorga ; Soult with the Second at Benavente and Zamora ; Mortier with the Fifth at Valladolid ; and Victor with the First about Talavera. In other words, the whole of these could be concentrated at Salamanca within a week, three out of the four upon the Tagus within the same time, and the whole upon the Tagus within at most a fortnight. Singularly  
July. enough, also, Joseph on the 1st of July received a letter from Napoleon, dated at Schönbrunn on the 12th of June, to the effect that the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps were to be placed under Soult's command to march against the British, pursue them without respite, beat them and throw them into the sea. "If this concentration takes place at once," wrote the Emperor, "the English should be destroyed and the business of Spain ended."<sup>2</sup>

It remains to take notice of yet another corps, the Fourth, commanded by Sebastiani, which, as will be

<sup>1</sup> Victor to Joseph, 29th May, 8th June ; Jourdan to Victor, 1st June ; Joseph to Napoleon, 10th June 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph to Napoleon, 10th, 16th, 28th June, 3rd July 1809 ; Clarke to Joseph (with Napoleon's orders of 12th June), 18th June 1809.

remembered, had at the end of March utterly routed 1809.  
the Spanish army of La Mancha at Ciudad Real. After the action, Sebastiani had remained in observation of the passes to the north of the Sierra Morena ; while General Venegas busied himself in assembling another army, which by the middle of June counted some twenty thousand men with twenty-six guns. Upon the retreat of Victor from the Guadiana, Joseph, judging that the movement would uncover Sebastiani's western flank, ordered the Fourth Corps to fall back to Madrideojos, whereupon Venegas promptly advanced ; and Sebastiani, alarmed at exaggerated reports of his numbers, besought Joseph urgently for reinforcements. The King accordingly hurried to his aid with five thousand men of June 22.  
his central reserve from Madrid ; and Venegas immediately retired once more to the Sierra. Joseph followed him as far as Almagro, forty-five miles southwest of Madrideojos, when, upon the intelligence that Victor was crossing the Tagus, he returned with his reserve to Toledo, leaving Sebastiani with the Fourth Corps to south of the Guadiana, full four days' march from Toledo.

It will have been observed that, in following the movements of the French armies during June, no account has been taken of those of the British troops. The narrative, however, has been all the truer for this omission, because, owing to the faithful reticence of all classes of the Spaniards and Portuguese, the French commanders had no knowledge whatever of Wellesley's proceedings. It is now time to return to Wellesley himself, whom we left in the second week of June assembling his army at Abrantes. On the 11th he June 11.  
received from Castlereagh authority to extend his operations in Spain beyond the provinces adjacent to the Portuguese frontier, provided that his advance would not endanger the safety of Portugal ; and to enable him to do so Castlereagh agreed to send him, in addition to Craufurd's light brigade and a battery of horse-artillery, which had already been promised to

1809. him, a second battery and seven more battalions of infantry.<sup>1</sup> It is somewhat curious that this last reinforcement was due chiefly, if not entirely, to the exigencies of the expedition to Walcheren. It was impossible to furnish shipping to convey the troops to the Scheldt except by withdrawing transport-vessels from the Tagus; and this Ministers could not venture to do, without augmenting Wellesley's army to a strength which would banish any probability of its being driven to re-embark at Lisbon. But Castlereagh must not lose credit for devising every means to help the General whose operations on the Douro had done so much to justify his appointment. Since the whole of the seven new battalions were second battalions, he authorised Wellesley to send three of them to Gibraltar, and to draw from that garrison three mature battalions<sup>2</sup> in their stead. Further, he promised Sir Arthur another regiment of cavalry—the Royal Dragoons—"if he wanted it very much," prepared for him three hundred horses for his artillery, responded instantly to applications for flour and forage, and shipped off fifty thousand pairs of boots when Wellesley had asked only for thirty thousand. He even sent a consignment of money, though he entreated the General to draw a bill whenever there was a chance of obtaining cash for it, specie in England being, as Castlereagh said, at the lowest possible ebb. In short, he ministered to the wants of Wellesley with a minute carefulness which, considering the claims of the Walcheren expedition upon his time and attention, is beyond all praise.<sup>3</sup> All this was encouraging, and in truth Sir Arthur needed encouragement at the moment, for his short campaign had revealed sad defects in his army.

In the first place, the behaviour of the men on the march was exceedingly bad. "They are a rabble,"

<sup>1</sup> 2/5th, 2/28th, 2/34th, 2/39th, 2/42nd, 2/47th, 2/88th.

<sup>2</sup> 48th, 57th, 61st.

<sup>3</sup> *Corres. of Castlereagh*, vii. 70-75, 82-84; Castlereagh to the King, 25th May; to Wellesley, 25th, 26th May; 6th, 11th June 1809.

wrote Wellesley in his sweeping way, "who cannot 1809. bear success any more than Sir John Moore's army could bear failure." This misconduct does not appear to have shown itself until the operations on the Douro were over and the troops were on their way down country to Abrantes; but then their behaviour was disgraceful. They plundered the Portuguese unmercifully, seizing their horses and cattle in order to make them buy the animals back again, and stealing even the horses of the cavalry to sell them to the Commissariat. It is most improbable that these practices extended to the whole army; indeed from Wellesley's own language it should seem that they were confined chiefly to stragglers and convalescent invalids, or in other words to the skulkers and malingerers whom nothing could compel to remain in the ranks on the march. Colborne, it will be remembered, reckoned that there were from fifty to a hundred such men in every battalion, and had ascribed all the earlier trouble in Moore's army exclusively to them. There were, however, instances in which Wellesley accused complete corps as guilty of these malpractices, and actually threatened to send them into garrison and to report them as unfit for service in the field. The offenders in question were the Eighty-seventh and the Eighty-eighth,<sup>1</sup> both of them of course Irish regiments; and it appears further that, generally speaking, the men who came from the Irish militia were especially troublesome. This, indeed, was to be expected. The Irish Militia was notorious for indiscipline, and Irish regiments, though unsurpassed on the battlefield,

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Donkin, 16th June 1809. The numbers of the regiments are left blank in the printed despatches, but the blanks can be filled up by reading Wellesley to Mackenzie, 18th June 1809. Mr. Oman includes the 5/60th in Wellesley's censure; but looking to Wellesley's letters to Col. Gordon of 17th June and to Donkin of 23rd June, this battalion seems to deserve exemption. It must be said for the 88th that it had been hastily completed by drafts from the 2nd battalion, and that its brigadier, Tilson, had not worked well with his commander during the campaign; but its behaviour was acknowledged by one of its own officers to have been very bad at this time. Grattan, *Adventures of the Connaught Rangers*, i. 56.

1809. have never been famous for exemplary behaviour in camp or in barracks. It is well known that they require ruling with a stronger hand than do English or Scots. If the strong hand be present, an Irish battalion can be raised to the highest pitch of excellence ; if it be absent, the men, though always ready to advance and to fight, will be disorderly in quarters and very likely mutinous in retreat.

Unfortunately the means for bringing English skulkers and Irish ruffians to reason in 1809 were deficient. Wellesley made it a rule, so far as possible, never to send out a detachment or to leave a party of invalids behind, without placing an officer in charge of them. But in the first place a great many of his battalions were second battalions, which were short of officers ; and in the next, a great many of the officers were negligent of their duty. Wellesley complained that this negligence was so common that an officer, if tried for the offence, would probably be acquitted by his fellows, who were equally guilty of it ; so that there was no means of deterring the culprits through fear of punishment. He complained, further, that a Commander-in-Chief abroad was equally powerless to encourage the deserving by reward, since all patronage had been lately withdrawn from him.<sup>1</sup> This was an evil from which the Navy suffered no less than the Army ; and the question is too large to be discussed in this place. But even if the Commander-in-Chief had been endowed with the authority which he desired in respect of officers, he was still fettered as to his powers of enforcing discipline upon the men, for reasons which require a moment's notice.

Regimental Courts Martial for the trial of the lighter military offences had been instituted in 1762, in order to protect soldiers from any possibility of oppres-

<sup>1</sup> It may be presumed that Wellesley knew what he was saying; but I doubt the accuracy of this statement. See, for instance, Lord Stair's bitter comment in 1742, Vol. II. of this History, p. 88.

sion on the part of commanding officers. The members of the court were not sworn to do justice, the obligation being considered entirely a matter of honour ; nor were the witnesses placed upon their oath. A Regimental Court Martial was, in fact, treated as a kind of family tribunal, in which all parties knew and trusted each other ; nor had the system worked amiss. The men made no complaint ; and the only objection to it was that, owing to the difficulty in many garrisons of assembling a General Court Martial, Regimental Courts Martial took cognizance of serious offences under trivial names, and inflicted very severe sentences. The obvious remedy was to establish an intermediate court between the Regimental and the General, and to limit the sentences which a Regimental Court Martial might inflict. It occurred, however, to certain members of the House of Commons, described by Sir John Moore as "men who know little of soldiers, and have no experience of regimental service," that abuses might be corrected by causing the members of every court to be sworn to do justice according to the evidence before them, and the witnesses to be sworn to tell the truth. The clauses to this effect appear to have been introduced by General Richard Fitzpatrick, the friend of Fox, better known as a politician than as a soldier, and as a man of pleasure and fashion than as a politician. The Duke of York at once protested against the innovation, as likely to be noxious to discipline ; though he was willing to establish an intermediate court, and to limit the sentences of Regimental Courts Martial. The proposed measure would, as he represented, cause the men to believe that they could not trust their officers, and the officers that they could not trust the men. The Secretary at War, William Dundas, called for the opinion of the leading military authorities, who almost without exception strongly condemned Fitzpatrick's reforms. Men so divergent in character as the Duke of York, David Dundas, James Pulteney, James Craig, Harry Burrard, John Whitelocke, John Moore, Robert Brown-



1809. rigg, Harry Calvert, and Colonel Gordon, with one voice denounced the change as uncalled for and likely to be fatal to discipline. Of the two who supported it, one, Lord Mulgrave, talked about the "awful impression of an oath," an argument demolished by David Dundas, who anticipated that "a military oath might become as proverbial as a Custom-house oath;" while the other, Lord Chatham, shrewder and more practical, thought that the swearing of officers might improve discipline by checking the acquittal of prisoners in regiments where a party existed adverse to the commanding officer. The great majority of opinions, however, was overwhelmingly against the change, more particularly in the middle of a great war. Yet none the less William Dundas declared that the protestants had given no reasons in support of their views. The Government, generally, found it less troublesome to give way to Fitzpatrick than to support the Horse Guards; and the swearing both of members and witnesses in Regimental Courts Martial was enjoined by the Mutiny Act of 1805.<sup>1</sup>

The results of this rejection of practical experience in favour of sentimental speculation were speedily seen. The solemnity of an oath had no efficacy to make Moore's officers second him during his retreat; and Wellesley in 1809 declared it to be a positive hindrance to discipline. Soldiers had as little conscience about perjuring themselves as any other men; but the officers were more squeamish and, being sworn to do justice "according to the evidence," found their verdict in agreement with perjured testimony, with the result that it was almost impossible to convict a prisoner before a Regimental Court Martial. "It is no longer a court of honour," wrote Wellesley, "at the hands of which a soldier was certain of receiving punishment if he deserved; but it is a court of law, where decisions are to be found according to the evidence principally of those on whose actions it is constituted as a restraint."

<sup>1</sup> See the opinions of the officers in *Military Transactions*, ii. 39-58; *H.D.* iii. 695, 857, 4th, 12th March, 1805.

It is extremely probable that the regimental officers, 1809. disliking the new system, took no pains to make it efficient; and that, having the fear of Cobbett or of the House of Commons before their eyes, they shrank even in the necessary cases from inflicting punishment.<sup>1</sup> Still, whatever the cause, the fact remains that Regimental Courts Martial, which had maintained discipline admirably until 1805, failed to do so after that year; and the inevitable inference is, not necessarily that the swearing of members and witnesses was in itself wrong, but that it was the height of folly in the War Office to introduce, against all military advice, so great a change in the middle of a war.

Apart from this, there was in the British army no military police. There was a provost-marshal, with deputies and officials of his own, who by custom had the power to inflict summary punishment for breaches of discipline in war, even to the extent of death, at the Commander-in-Chief's order. Thus the Duke of York, while in Flanders, had summarily hanged a marauding dragoon; but the chief of his staff in reporting the fact had begged that it might not be mentioned, lest members of Parliament should blaspheme; and Wellesley, who knew the House of Commons, confessed to Castlereagh that in his opinion custom would not warrant the exercise of this power, or that, in plain words, he was afraid to exercise it without legal sanction. Yet he was fain to add that he did not know how the army was to be commanded at all if the practice were not continued, and even extended. The fact seems to be that the discipline of British armies in the field had hitherto been carried on in much the same way as that of the Standing Army before the passing of the Mutiny Act—that is to say, through methods sanctified by custom. But now pamphleteers, newspapers, and members of the House of Commons had by inquiry and denunciation sapped the strength of that custom,

<sup>1</sup> See the case reviewed in Wellesley to Brigadier Campbell, June 21, 1809.

1809. and had furnished no substitute to take its place. "Our law," wrote Wellesley, "instead of being strong in proportion to the temptation and means for indiscipline and irregularity, has been weakened. We have not adopted the additional means of restraint and punishment practised by other nations and our enemies, although we have imitated them in those particulars which have increased and aggravated our irregularities." Reformers seldom reflect that every abuse has its origin in what was once an use, and that it is of little profit to abolish the one without restoring the other. This trouble with the discipline of the army will confront us constantly during the Peninsular War.<sup>1</sup>

The next difficulty which Wellesley had to overcome was want of money. He had only been able to advance against Soult by obtaining a loan of £10,000, not very willingly provided, from the city of Oporto. The pay of the troops was two months in arrear; the army owed huge sums all over Portugal, and it was impossible to equip it for a further campaign against Victor without at least some ready cash, the lack of which worried Sir Arthur terribly. "I cannot get supplies, or boats, or carts to move supplies from Lisbon without money," he wrote to Villiers on the 21st of June; but Castlereagh was in as great difficulties over specie as himself. It was only with extreme labour that £100,000 was obtained from Cadiz to answer the most immediate and pressing necessities; and, until this arrived in the third week of June, Wellesley was powerless to move. The Government in England could not be blamed, for it was as much embarrassed as the General; and in fact, as shall be seen, the Peninsular War was carried on from beginning to end with the pay of both soldiers and hired transport in constant arrear.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington Desp.* : Wellesley to Villiers, 31st May; to Castlereagh, 31st May, 17th June. *Supp. Desp.*, G.O., 19th, 20th, 24th, 26th, 29th May, 13th, 17th June, 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Huskisson, 30th May; to Villiers 31st May,

The deficiency of cash, of course, affected chiefly 1809. the service of transport and supply, which was already in no very flourishing condition. Sir Arthur summed it up in his usual terse style : "Our Commissariat is very bad indeed, but it is new and will improve, I hope." Horses and mules, as we have seen, were scarce in Portugal, and Wellesley was dismayed to find that the teams of the artillery which he had taken to the Douro were nearly destroyed, partly, no doubt, owing to the fact that the forage of the country was unfamiliar to them, but chiefly thanks to the neglect of the Commissaries to provide any forage at all. The horses of the cavalry had likewise suffered not a little ; and Wellesley was compelled to make good the deficiencies of both services by handing over to them horses which had been sent out for the waggon-train, or in other words for the Commissariat. For this cause, and also, no doubt, for the more important reason that few roads in Portugal were fit for any but pack-animals, Wellesley seems to have determined that mules alone should be used for purposes of transport. The Twenty-third Light Dragoons, recently arrived in Portugal from brilliant service in India, assumed that they would keep their two galloping guns, and asked for mules to draw them. They were informed by the Commander-in-Chief that he could find better employment for mules if they could be obtained, and that he would provide horses for the guns if he thought it necessary to retain them at all, since the demand for mules was great and the supply extremely limited.

The allowance for regimental transport<sup>1</sup> was one mule to every troop of cavalry and to every company of infantry to carry the camp-kettles, with five additional mules to each battalion of infantry, and six to each

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1st, 11th, 21st June ; to Castlereagh, 11th, 22nd June ; to Frere, 14th June ; to J. Murray, 16th June ; to Lt.-Col. Burke, 18th June ; Castlereagh to Wellesley, 11th June, 11th July 1809.

<sup>1</sup> I use the term for convenience, though not, of course, quite in the modern sense.

1809. regiment of cavalry to carry the pay-master's books, the regimental surgeon's chest, the armourer's tools, entrenching tools,<sup>1</sup> and in the case of the cavalry, the equipment of the saddler and the veterinary surgeon. It must, however, be noted that the mules for the entrenching tools, armourer, saddler, and veterinary surgeon alone were the property of the public, the remainder being supplied by the regimental officers concerned out of the allowance called "bat, baggage, and forage allowance." This arrangement gave rise to much friction, for, if a regimental mule became useless, the officer whose property it was, having no special allowance to replace it, naturally tried to lay hands on a public, a captured, or stolen mule, upon all of which the Commissary-general rightly possessed, under General Orders, priority of claim. It will, however, be noticed that, as at present, the regimental transport carried no provisions; the standing order being that, whenever the Commissaries could issue the quantity, the infantry must carry three days' bread and the cavalry three days' forage. To all intent, therefore, there was no such organisation as that which now goes by the name of the supply-column; all victuals being brought forward by what would now be termed the supply-park or mobile magazine, though they were distributed through brigade or regimental stores.

These mobile magazines consisted, it seems, entirely of pack-animals, though carts were used to bring forward ammunition and treasure. Wellesley could not endure the bullock-carts of the country, the extreme slowness of which, on the hilly roads of Portugal, forbade them to keep up with the main body.<sup>2</sup> One such cart only

<sup>1</sup> The allowance of entrenching tools was, for every battalion of infantry, 5 spades, 5 shovels, 5 pick-axes, and 5 felling-axes; for every regiment of cavalry, 8 each of spades and shovels, 4 each of pickaxes and felling-axes.

<sup>2</sup> To this day the country bullock-carts of Portugal are of the most primitive kind, the wheels not turning free on their axles, but being made fast to the axle and turning with it, to an accompaniment of infinite groaning and creaking.. It should seem from

was allowed to each regiment to carry men who fell sick on the march, that is to say, to serve as an ambulance; all others were strictly forbidden. General Cotton, evidently from anxiety to deliver his underfed and overburdened troop-horses from the weight of the three days' forage, begged for carts to carry it, but was peremptorily refused. Officers who, in defiance of Wellesley's orders, took carts for their private baggage, were sternly ordered to discard them as a public inconvenience. "It is a determined measure that no baggage is to be carried upon bullock-cars . . . those who have baggage to carry must be provided with mules or horses." This prohibition naturally brought all kinds of forbidden burdens upon the backs of the regimental mules, an abuse which called down renewed regulations and sharp rebukes. The men, too, at first neutralised the foresight which had given them three days' rations by improvidence and wastefulness, being helpless and breadless before the third day. The army, in fact, was raw and inexperienced, and did not understand that, for the first time since the war began, it was entering upon a series of scientific campaigns of such a kind as it had never known before. Wellesley's own opinion of it was violently expressed: "We are an excellent army on parade, an excellent one to fight, but we are worse than any enemy in the country, and take my word for it, that either defeat or success would dissolve us." He might more truly have said of it what he said of the Commissariat: "It is new and will improve."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, though the want of money delayed Wellesley's preparations for long, his reinforcements also were slow to reach him. Sir David Dundas for some reason was in no haste to set aside light infantry

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G.O. of 13th May 1809, that Cradock had been the first to forbid private wheeled transport.

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington Supp. Desp.*, vi. 262-267, 270-271, 274-276, 284-285; Wellesley to Cotton, 3rd June; to Villiers, 27th May; to Gen. Mackenzie, 29th June, 1809.

1809. for the Peninsular army ; and it was not till the second week in May that Craufurd's brigade<sup>1</sup> received its orders  
May 24. to embark. On the 24th of that month it sailed from the Downs, but was driven by a gale into Portsmouth, where it was detained by foul winds until the middle of June, and did not reach the Tagus till the end of the month. The same cause kept back the two batteries of Horse Artillery and the seven additional battalions promised to Wellesley from Ireland. Of the artillery, one battery, the famous "Chestnut Troop" under Captain Ross, arrived with Craufurd, and the other some time later ; while none of the infantry reached Portugal before July. Yet another battalion, the first of the Eleventh Foot, which was also ordered to the Tagus from Madeira, did not come in until August. The Twenty-third Light Dragoons appeared on the 11th of June, but the horses were, of course, unfit for immediate work. Moreover, upon their coming, the two squadrons of the Twentieth Light Dragoons and the troops of the Third German Hussars were at once despatched, pursuant to Castlereagh's orders, to join the remainder of their regiments in Sicily. In fact, the reinforcements which reached Wellesley before the opening of the campaign were almost insignificant. He recovered the Fortieth Foot from Seville, and he obtained two seasoned battalions—the Forty-eighth and Sixty-first—from Gibraltar in exchange for two raw battalions<sup>2</sup> which had formed part of his original army. But only two of these joined him at Abrantes, though the Sixty-first and the Twenty-third Light Dragoons overtook him on the march to Talavera. Meanwhile he distributed his force, such as it was, into four divisions under Generals Sherbrooke, Hill, Mackenzie, and A. Campbell ; for Paget had gone home on account of his wound ; while Murray, whose departure Wellesley for some reason

<sup>1</sup> 1/43rd, 1/52nd, 1/95th.

<sup>2</sup> 2/9th, 2/30th. But it seems that the 2/87th was in a worse state than the 2/9th, and that Wellesley repented that he had not sent it to Gibraltar. Wellesley to Donkin, 23rd June 1809.

deplored as a loss, had sailed to England in a fit of 1809. temper over the grant of superior rank to Beresford.<sup>1</sup> Thus was initiated the divisional organisation which endured till the close of the war.<sup>2</sup>

It remains, lastly, to consider the plan of campaign which Wellesley had concerted with Cuesta. He had opened communication with the Spanish General in a letter of the 22nd of May; and on the 30th had despatched to him two of his staff officers, Colonels Bourke and Cadogan, both of whom we saw at Buenos Ayres, to gain intelligence and to learn Cuesta's views. At that time Victor's army was still in Estremadura; and Cuesta propounded three schemes. The first was based on the traditions of Baylen, for surrounding the enemy; the second, equally absurd, was that the British should cross the Tagus at Alcantara and assail Victor's flank from the north, while the Spaniards fell upon his

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Villiers, 30th May; to Castlereagh, 26th June 1809.

<sup>2</sup> 1st Division. Sherbrooke.	{	Guards Brigade :	1/ Coldstream, 1/3rd Guards.
		Cameron's "	1/61st, 2/83rd.
		Langwerth's "	1st and 2nd line batts. Light Cos. K.G.L.
		Low's "	5th and 7th line batts. K.G.L.
2nd Division. Hill.	{	Tilson's *	" 1/3rd, 2/48th, 2/66th.
		Stewart's "	" 29th, 1/48th, 1st batt. detach- ments.
3rd Division. Mackenzie.	{	Mackenzie's "	" 2/24th, 2/31st, 1/45th.
		Donkin's "	" 5/60th, 2/87th, 1/88th.
4th Division. A. Campbell.	{	Campbell's "	" 2/7th, 2/53rd.
		Kemmis's † "	" 1/40th, 97th, 2nd batt. detach- ments.
Cavalry Division. Payne.	{	Fane's "	" 3rd D.G., 4th D.
		Cotton's "	" 14th and 16th L.D.
		Ansen's "	" 1st L.D., K.G.L.; 2 3rd L.D.

\* Tilson asked leave to resign his command if he was to be employed with the Portuguese troops; but being told bluntly that he might go as soon as it pleased him, repented and was reinstated. Wellesley to Beresford, 29th May; to Castlereagh 16th, 23rd June 1809.

† At first Peacock's brigade, till Colonel Peacock went to assume command at Lisbon about the 23rd of June.



1809. front from the south-west ; and a third proposed that the British, remaining to the north of the Tagus, should advance by Castello Branco upon Plasencia so as to cut off Victor's retreat by the bridge of Almaraz, and possibly also by the bridges of Arzobispo and Talavera. Wellesley would accept only the third of these plans ; whereupon Cuesta promptly evinced so decided a preference for the first that Sir Arthur very reluctantly gave way. Then, fortunately, the withdrawal of Victor across the Tagus changed the entire situation. Cuesta followed up the Marshal as he retired ; but, mindful of Wellesley's repeated injunctions to caution, kept his main body upon the southern bank of the Tagus, pushing forward reconnoitring parties only over the bridge, which he had repaired, at Almaraz. The route by Castello Branco and Plasencia, therefore, was obviously that by which Wellesley's army should advance ; and Cuesta at once desired that he should take it.<sup>1</sup> The British commander, however, was still delayed by the lack of treasure, which had only arrived at Lisbon on the 15th, and to Sir Arthur's disgust was not brought up to the

June 25. army until the 25th. "We have been obliged to halt nearly three weeks for want of money. Our distress for everything has been very great indeed, and has been produced by the want of money." So wrote Wellesley to Huskisson, evidently intending that, if the Treasury failed to realise its shortcomings, it should not be for want of reiterated statement.<sup>2</sup>

However, there was still plenty to employ him. Though he looked forward to the retirement of the enemy to the line of the Ebro, he was none the less

<sup>1</sup> I cannot quite understand upon what authority Mr. Oman asserts that Cuesta continued to raise difficulties against Wellesley's movement by Plasencia. Wellesley only heard of Victor's retirement from Merida on the 17th of June ; and on the same day, when reporting the fact to Castlereagh, he stated in a postscript : "I have received letters from General Cuesta of the 16th . . . he now wishes me to march by Plasencia."

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Castlereagh, 17th June ; to Beresford, 23rd June ; to Huskisson, 28th June, 1809.

attentive to the defence of the Tagus, the difficulty of 1809. which seems to have caused him some concern. Measures had also to be taken for the establishment of depots of stores, both at Santarem and at Almeida, for Northern Portugal would require to be guarded during his absence with Cuesta. Romana had asked for Silveira to join him and prosecute offensive operations in Galicia, but to this Wellesley strongly objected. Up to the 21st of June he saw no reason why Ney should evacuate Galicia, though he imagined that the retirement of Victor and Sebastiani might bring it about; but on the 27th he suspected that such evacuation had begun, and gave Beresford definite orders, if he should hear of any movement of Ney's from Galicia to Castile, to move eastward upon a circle parallel to that described by the enemy's march. Lastly, he had warned the Junta of Badajoz betimes to accumulate supplies for his army in the valley of the Tietar; and, having received assurances from the Supreme Junta that every needful article would be forthcoming, he sent his Commissaries forward to purchase mules and to arrange for the subsistence of the troops,<sup>1</sup> for in spite of all his efforts he was still very imperfectly supplied with transport.<sup>2</sup> He seems to have had no misgivings, in spite of Moore's experience, lest the authority alike of Supreme and of local Junta should prove to be naught. He declined to believe the very disquieting reports which he received from Colonel Roche,<sup>3</sup> at Cuesta's headquarters, of the state of the

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley's special provision for himself was 2 lbs. of black tea. Wellesley to Villiers, 27th June 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Bourke, 21st June; to Beresford, 3rd, 23rd, 27th June; to Junta of Badajoz, 17th June, 1809.

<sup>3</sup> "In justice to Colonel Roche I must add that before I joined General Cuesta's army he wrote me an account of its state, to which I was not inclined and did not pay any attention at the time, but which I afterwards found to be a true account in every respect."—Wellington to Lord Wellesley, 17th Sept. 1809.

I have been unable to find any letter of Roche at Apsley House of earlier date than 6th July 1809, but the following passage, written at that date, shows that he had sent earlier reports of the same tenor:—"I wish to God I could give you a favourable account of this

1809. Spanish army. And so, sanguine and unsuspecting, he went upon his way.

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[Cuesta's] army ; but truth and my responsibility oblige me to say that I see nothing to alter my former opinion on the subject. Anything like order, system, or discipline is out of the question ; and when one adds that, with few exceptions, the officers are more ignorant than the men, it is impossible not to feel apprehensions for the issue."

## CHAPTER XXX

ON the 27th of June Wellesley marched from Abrantes 1809. with twenty-three thousand British and Germans of all ranks and thirty guns,<sup>1</sup> having made over the whole of the Portuguese to Beresford. The army moved in two columns: the northern, which proceeded by Cortiçada, Sobreira, Formosa, and Sarzedas, and was accompanied by Wellesley himself; and the southern, which following a course parallel to the Tagus along its southern bank to Villa Velha de Rodaõ, crossed the river at that point, and united with the other column on the 30th of June June 30. and 1st of July at Castello Branco. Here Wellesley heard of Victor's continued retreat towards Talavera, and a vague report that Ney had evacuated Coruña,<sup>2</sup> receiving at the same time the more welcome intelligence that Craufurd's brigade had reached Lisbon on the 28th. On the 1st the army continued its July 1. march eastward upon Zibreira and Zarza la Mayor, the advanced guard passing the Spanish frontier on the 3rd. At Zarza Wellesley was joined by Wilson July 3. with his Portuguese; and from this point he detached Donkin's brigade to take the southern route by Ceclavin and Torrejoncillo upon Coria, in order to clear his right flank, leading the main body to the same place by the northern road past Moraleja. At the same time he requested Cuesta to secure his left flank by occupying the pass of Baños with some Spanish

<sup>1</sup> Six batteries without their howitzers.—Duncan, *History of the Royal Artillery*, ii. 248-249.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Frere and Castlereagh, 1st July 1809.

1809. infantry which lay at Plasencia.<sup>1</sup> At Zarza la Mayor also Wellesley saw the French General Franceschi,<sup>2</sup> who, having been taken prisoner by Spanish guerillas on his way from Zamora to Madrid, was now being escorted to Seville; and from him Sir Arthur learned that Mortier's corps was at Valladolid. This important intelligence was supplemented, when the British

July 8. General arrived at Plasencia on the 8th, by an abstract of two letters from Soult to Napoleon and to Joseph, which had been found upon Franceschi. These gave a full account of Soult's operations in Galicia, and of his movement to Zamora in order to refit his army. But they mentioned also Soult's new policy in regard to Galicia and his orders to Ney for carrying it out; and from this Wellesley naturally concluded that Ney must necessarily remain in that province. The general report of Soult upon his situation was not cheerful; and an intercepted letter from Victor to Joseph of the 25th of June represented the state of his army as desperate, so that Sir Arthur might reasonably take a hopeful view of his own prospects. On the other hand the news of Blake's defeat at Belchite, which arrived at the same time, was depressing; and the knowledge that there were two French corps only a hundred miles to north of him made Wellesley doubly anxious for the security of the passes of Baños and Perales on his left flank.<sup>3</sup>

July 9, 10. On the 9th and 10th the entire army streamed into Plasencia; and on the latter day Wellesley rode away with his staff to visit Cuesta in his camp at Casas del Puerto, a little to the south of the Tagus, opposite Almaraz. Owing to a mistake of their Spanish escort they did not arrive until after dark, when they reviewed

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Roche, 4th July 1809.

<sup>2</sup> He was kept in close captivity until 1811 when he died—a melancholy end for a singularly brave and brilliant officer, who was also an accomplished draughtsman and sculptor.

<sup>3</sup> Wellesley to Roche 8th July; to C. Flint 17th July; to Beresford 9th July 1809; and see the intercepted letters in *Supp. Desp.* vi. 298, 307-314.

the Spanish army, which had been under arms for 1809. several hours, by torch-light. Upon the whole they were not favourably impressed by what they saw. The soldiers, though physically fine men, were obviously untrained and undisciplined. The general officers were, with a few exceptions, old and infirm, and Cuesta himself, who had been overthrown and trampled on by his fugitive cavalry at Medellin nearly three months before, was still suffering so much from his injuries that he could not sit on his horse without support. The old man, now hard upon seventy years of age, was silent and reserved. He ruled his army always by mystery and terror, but now he was more than ordinarily taciturn and unbending, partly, no doubt, owing to physical exhaustion, but chiefly from intense jealousy of his British coadjutor. The Supreme Junta at Seville was torn by factions, each scheming desperately to secure military commands for its own favourites and to oust its rivals. Frere, whose mind always fastened greedily upon small matters, entered with zest into these intrigues. The Spanish candidate whom he preferred was his personal friend the Duke of Albuquerque, and the rival whom he most greatly feared was Cuesta himself; for Cuesta's army was devoted to its chief, and was suspected of a desire to make an end of the Supreme Junta altogether. It therefore became an object to the Ambassador to weaken the army of that leader; and with this view he suggested to Wellesley that he should advise Cuesta to detach ten thousand men towards Avila and Segovia.

Not content with this, Frere never ceased to work, privately indeed but without tact and without discretion, to secure the appointment of Sir Arthur himself as Generalissimo of the Spanish forces. The British Ministers would have welcomed such an arrangement, but, owing to the natural jealousy of the Spanish Government, conceived that the object was "more likely to be attained by refraining from pressing it"; and Wellesley himself, hearing from Frere of his ill-timed

1809. activity, reminded the Ambassador of the Cabinet's views, and told him plainly that his insinuations were not likely to have any good effect. But the mischief was done. Not satisfied with constant endeavours to act as Commander-in-Chief of the British army, Frere had attempted before Wellesley's arrival to direct the armies of Spain also, and had written letters to Cuesta in person which, from one in his position, were not merely meddlesome but positively insulting.<sup>1</sup> It was quite possible to gather from Frere's own language his designs as to Alburquerque, and Cuesta was perfectly well informed as to his proceedings on behalf of Wellesley. Cuesta's pride and self-esteem were great beyond all proportion either to his intellect or to his ability, but he may be excused if, in the circumstances, he regarded Wellesley as a man who was plotting to displace him, and if in consequence he received even the most innocent of Sir Arthur's proposals with extremity of suspicion and resentment.

July 11. On the 11th the two commanders sat in conference for four hours over their plan of campaign. Cuesta would not speak French; Wellesley could not speak Spanish; and the interview was conducted through Cuesta's Chief of the Staff, O'Donoju,<sup>2</sup> of whom Wellesley formed a high opinion. The information of the two Generals respecting the enemy before them was fairly good. It was to the effect that Victor lay a little to the east of Talavera, behind the Alberche, with about thirty-five thousand men, twenty-two thousand of them being of his own corps and the remainder from the reserve at Madrid; and that Sebastiani was at Madridejos with ten thousand men, observing Venegas, who was advancing against him with nearly double that number. As a matter of fact this estimate over-rated the strength of Victor, and under-rated that of Sebastiani

<sup>1</sup> See F.O. Spain. Frere to Sec. of State, 25th April 1809, and particularly his letter to Cuesta of 22nd April enclosed therein.

<sup>2</sup> O'Donoju had so little forgotten his native tongue that he wrote to Wellesley always in English.

by seven thousand men ; but none the less Wellesley and Cuesta were not unreasonable in assuming that the forces of Venegas and Sebastiani were quantities that would cancel each other, and might therefore be left out of account. There remained the armies of Ney, Soult, and Mortier. Of these the first was firmly believed to be still in Galicia ; the second was known to be at Zamora ; while it was reported truly that Joseph was about to order the Fifth Corps to march upon Madrid from Valladolid, wherefore Mortier might be expected to be in the vicinity of Avila.<sup>1</sup> As to Soult, Wellesley considered him to be in no condition, without artillery and with a beaten army, to undertake any more serious operation than that which was revealed by the Marshal's intercepted despatches—a raid to the north-westward upon Bragança ; though none the less, as we have seen, the British General never forgot the importance of securing his left flank at the passes of Baños and Perales.

In this situation the first plan broached by Wellesley to Cuesta was that suggested by Frere, that ten thousand Spaniards should be detached under the Duke of Alburquerque towards Avila and Segovia to turn the French right ;<sup>2</sup> that the remaining force of the united armies, forty-five thousand men, should attack Victor on the Alberche in the centre ; and that Venegas, after pushing Sebastiani back across the Tagus, should pass that river himself at Aranjuez or Fuentidueña, and threaten Madrid upon the enemy's left. Cuesta answered by proposing that Wellesley should detach the ten thousand men from his own army to Avila ; to which the British Commander justly objected that, if his troops were to act with advantage, they must act

<sup>1</sup> As events turned out, no order was sent by Joseph to Mortier until the 13th of July, and then only to concentrate his force at Villacastin, about twenty miles north and east of Avila.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Oman says—"to look for Mortier, if he were to be found in that direction, and, if not, to turn to the enemy's right and threaten Madrid" (ii. 475-476). Wellesley's despatches say nothing about observing Mortier, though of course it seems the obvious duty of such a detachment.



1809. in one body, and that Cuesta could better afford the detachment from his thirty thousand men than he himself from his twenty thousand. Cuesta still refused to comply, and was indeed perfectly right ; for if this weak corps had taken the direction put forward for it, it must inevitably have marched into the jaws of Mortier's superior force and have been destroyed. Wellesley wrote to Frere that, though he agreed with him in thinking that such a movement would be, from a military point of view, really advantageous—no doubt because it would prevent the reinforcement of Victor from the garrison of Madrid—yet he did not consider it necessary. But, unless Sir Arthur was altogether at fault concerning the strength of Mortier's corps, it is difficult to believe that he would have suggested the plan except at Frere's instance ; and, since its principal object was to give the Duke of Alburquerque an independent command and to enable him to gain distinction, the whole proceeding can hardly be called by any other name than a political intrigue. It would perhaps be too hard upon Wellesley to censure him for lending himself to such a scheme at so early a moment in his command ; for, apart from all patriotic obligation, it was his special duty to his patron Castlereagh to work kindly with the intimate friend of Castlereagh's disloyal colleague, Canning. At the same time it is to be lamented that he should have done so, for Cuesta did not fail to perceive the drift of the proposal, and became more suspicious than ever.

Wellesley then suggested that this same Spanish detachment should move north-eastward by the pass of Baños, ostensibly, as it seems, still to make a demonstration towards Avila, but really, no doubt, to secure the left flank of the main army of the Allies. Cuesta, however, would not hear of this. He conceived any plan of the kind to be designed simply to undermine his authority ; and he declined to spare more than two battalions and a squadron, or about two thousand men in all, for this service. These, together with Wilson's

Portuguese, were ordered to move through the Vera de Plasencia up the right bank of the Tietar, and so by Navamorcuende to the Alberche, occupying in succession all the villages on the right bank as far as Escalona, so as to cover the flank of the British troops during their advance eastward, and resuming touch with them at San Roman. It remained to provide for the operations on the right, as to which Wellesley's first proposal was accepted, namely, that Venegas with his twenty-three thousand men should push Sebastiani back to the Tagus, and endeavour to force the passage of that river, so as to menace Madrid from the east. If Sebastiani should decline to follow him eastward, Venegas was to march upon Madrid and seize it. It is easy, by the light of subsequent events, to see that this plan, being based upon imperfect information, was altogether faulty ; but the most remarkable point in it is that Wellesley was anxious to make good the greatest fault of all, namely, the omission to set a sufficient guard over the pass of Baños. That he should have failed in his effort was doubtless due ultimately to the obstinacy of Cuesta, but primarily to the tactless meddling of Frere.

Meanwhile Wellesley's troubles were increasing upon every side. The Twenty-third Light Dragoons joined him at Plasencia on the 14th, and the Forty-eighth and Sixty-first on the 16th ; but the most of his reinforcements were detained at Lisbon for want of twelve mules apiece for their regimental transport. Moreover, the general question of transport was becoming very serious. His military chest and ammunition had been stopped at Abrantes for want of carts, so that he was unable to pay ready money, as he had promised, for his purchases. The Portuguese authorities were most backward in furnishing either animals or vehicles ; and the Spaniards, though ready enough to produce victuals, were not more eager than the Portuguese to provide transport. So serious was the position that on the 16th Wellesley warned Cuesta that he should undertake no new operations

1809.

July 16.

1809. until his wants were supplied. In justice to the Supreme Junta it must be said that Commissioners had been sent to collect the animals and victuals for which Wellesley had asked ; but the people had driven off all their mules lest they should be seized for the public service,<sup>1</sup> and the Junta's authority was too weak to enforce its demands. "We have not procured a cart or a mule for the service of the army," wrote Wellesley to Frere ; ". . . we really should not be worse off in an enemy's country, or indeed so ill, as we should there take by force what we should require."<sup>2</sup>

These difficulties over transport kept Wellesley at July 17. Plasencia until the 17th, when, in spite of his threats to O'Donaju, he set his troops in motion eastward. He sent orders to the reinforcements at Lisbon to join him by way of Abrantes, with the exception of two battalions<sup>3</sup> which he placed at the disposal of Beresford. To Beresford also he despatched instructions to send an officer to see how the pass of Baños was occupied, and to keep an eye upon it. Sir Arthur did not think that the French would venture through it, because, owing to the destruction of the bridges of Alcantara and Almaraz, they would find themselves pent in between the mountains and the Tagus ; but he was evidently still uneasy about the pass, though ignorant of the danger that menaced his left flank. The reports of the evacuation of Ferrol and Coruña by the French were now confirmed ; but Wellesley never dreamed that Ney's corps was at Astorga. On the 17th he advanced from Plasencia with something over twenty-

July 18. one thousand men ; on the 18th the whole army

<sup>1</sup> Leslie (*Military Journal*, p. 132), in descending the pass of Tornevecas, within twenty-five miles of Plasencia, on the 17th of July, met with vast herds of mules and cattle which were being driven off.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to the Comm.-General, 8th July ; to Beresford and Villiers, 13th July ; to Castlereagh, 15th July ; to O'Donaju and Frere, 16th July ; to the Junta to Plasencia, 18th July 1809.

<sup>3</sup> 2/5th, 2/58th.

crossed the Tietar over a flying bridge at La Bazagona, 1809. and headquarters reached Majadas; on the 19th they July 19. were at Centenillo; and on the 20th the entire force July 20. reached Orapesa. On that same night Cuesta, who had moved from Almaraz by Naval Moral, bivouacked five miles to the rear at La Calzada; and on the following day led his troops north-eastward upon July 21. Velada, where he was joined by Del Parque's division from Puente del Arzobispo. On that day the British remained halted; but the cavalry of the advanced guard came into contact with the enemy and took a few prisoners, while the Spaniards encountered a body of French horse about Gamonal. On the 22nd both July 22. armies proceeded in two columns,<sup>1</sup> Spaniards on the left, British on the right, upon Talavera; and upon reaching Gamonal the Spaniards again found themselves confronted by French cavalry, but this time by the whole division of Latour Maubourg's dragoons, who awaited them with the utmost calmness, dismounted and standing in the open plain. Nevertheless the Spanish cavalry did not venture to attack; and, even after the arrival of a division of infantry, they contented themselves with hour after hour of feeble skirmishing, until Anson's brigade of British dragoons came up, when the French retired precipitately round the northern suburb of the town and so across the Alberche. General Charles Stewart tried to lead the Spanish troopers to charge them as they retreated, but failed in three successive efforts to make the men follow him. Anson's brigade, attempting to charge the French, evidently

<sup>1</sup> Londonderry says that the Spaniards took the high road and the British a parallel road through the mountains upon the enemy's left, in the direction of San Roman. There is such a road, but San Roman would be on the enemy's right, being ten miles north of Talavera. Possibly Stewart frisked away in that direction with a few dragoons, as was his wont, and imagined that the whole army had followed him. By Leslie's account the march lay for most part through open plain; and the Spanish army was presently seen upon the British left. The British, therefore, must have followed the present direct road to Talavera, which was the obvious thing for them to do.

1809. without the use of ground-scouts, got into difficulties  
July 22. and lost a few men and horses from the fire of the enemy's horse-artillery. With this the day's work ended, the chief result to the Allies being to inspire the British with an immense contempt for the Spanish troops at large and for their General in particular. In truth it was not edifying for them to watch the Spanish Commander-in-Chief go out to the battle-field in a coach drawn by nine mules, and on his arrival to see the poor feeble old man lifted rather than supported from the coach to a carefully constructed seat on the carriage-cushions.<sup>1</sup>

Much more important was the result of the day's skirmish to the French, for Victor now ascertained for the first time that there were British troops with Cuesta, and at once imparted the intelligence to Madrid. There, since the arrival of Napoleon's letter of the 12th of June, Joseph had been corresponding with Soult as to the means of executing the Emperor's orders to concentrate the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps and drive the British from the Peninsula. Meanwhile on the 13th of July he had ordered Mortier's corps to march to Villacastin, from which point it could move with equal facility upon Salamanca and the Douro for the invasion of Portugal, or upon Madrid, if, as Joseph suspected, the British should require to be met in that quarter. Soult, however, strong in the orders of the Emperor, demanded that everything should be subordinated to his projected enterprise. Not only was every man of his three corps to be left free for his use, and assembled at Salamanca by the end of the month for active operations, but troops must be gathered in from all parts of Spain in order to form a reserve about the same town; also a corps of observation in Leon; and, finally, a strong detachment to cover his left flank at Salamanca. Further, money must be granted to him to fortify certain places on the Douro, and two million rations and a strong siege-train must be sent to Salamanca.

<sup>1</sup> Munster, *Campaign of 1809*.

When all these wants should have been supplied, he 1809. thought that he might be able to open his campaign with the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, and pursue it with success. Joseph replied, accepting the plan in general and consenting to leave the First Corps at Plasencia to guard Soult's flank, but declaring his inability either to draw from other quarters troops which should form a reserve and protect his communications, or to spare the Marshal more than £40,000 in money and six hundred thousand rations. At the same time, however, Joseph ordered Mortier's corps back to Valladolid, and thus definitely removed it from the sphere in which, though he knew it not, its services would have been most valuable.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Soult, having on the 18th received July 18. information of the British advance up the Tagus, directed Mortier to move his corps to Salamanca, and Ney to push one of his divisions forward to Zamora and to change his headquarters to Benavente. Moreover, on the 19th, he sent one of his best officers, July 19. General Foy, to Madrid to report these dispositions and to concert further operations with the King. Soult conjectured that Wellesley must intend either to march northward upon Salamanca, shifting his line of operations to Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, or to move forward by the valley of the Tagus upon Madrid. To meet either contingency, he recommended that the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps should be concentrated at Salamanca, and that, in the event of Wellesley's advancing up the Tagus, the whole should march upon his flank and rear by Bejar and the pass of Baños, and place him between two fires. The Marshal insisted, however, that his field-artillery, in which the losses during his late retreat had not yet been made good, must first be completed. Foy duly arrived at Madrid on the 22nd, on which same day, as we have seen, July 22. Joseph received his first definite intelligence of the

<sup>1</sup> Soult to Joseph, 13th July; Jourdan to Soult in reply, *Mem. du Roi Joseph*, vi. 217-229.

1809. presence of the British in front of Marshal Victor.  
July 22. The King and Jourdan at once fell in with Soult's plan, and sent Foy back with orders that Soult should collect his three corps as soon as possible and move upon Plasencia, where they hoped that he would arrive within four or five days. At the same time Sebastiani was directed to fall back upon Toledo; and on that very night Joseph, leaving only five thousand men to hold Madrid, marched for the Alberche with the remaining five thousand men of the garrison; his intention being that both these and Sebastiani's troops should unite with Victor.

Such was the position when the Allies bivouacked for the night: Mackenzie's division and Anson's cavalry brigade in advance before the right of Victor's position, the rest of the army in rear, and the Spaniards beyond Talavera. Wellesley on that evening urged upon Cuesta that the Allies should attack at the following dawn, the British by the northern and the Spanish by the southern fords and by the bridge; and at midnight he received  
July 23. the old man's tardy assent. At three o'clock, therefore, the divisions of Sherbrooke and Mackenzie took up their station over against the fords, and waited long but vainly for the Spaniards to do their part likewise. Wellesley at length rode off to seek Cuesta, and found him seated on his carriage-cushions on the bridge of the Alberche, the picture of helplessness. He had not risen until seven, and now poured forth feeble excuses for delaying his movements. After a time the advanced posts sent information that the French guns were withdrawn and the troops evidently in retreat; but Cuesta remained obdurate, and the attack was deferred till  
July 24. next day. Accordingly at dawn of the 24th the Allies again marched down to the river in dead silence, to find, as Wellesley had expected, that the enemy had disappeared. Victor had already sent back his baggage on the previous afternoon, and had followed it with his entire army under cover of darkness; and having gained ten miles on the Allies, he was beyond

reach of any decisive stroke. But for the obstinacy <sup>1809.</sup> of Cuesta he would have paid dearly for his temerity <sup>July 24.</sup> in waiting with twenty-three thousand men in the presence of twenty thousand British and more than thirty thousand Spaniards; and it seems only reasonable to suppose that on the 23rd he had been forewarned by some traitor on the Spanish staff that he need dread no attack.<sup>1</sup>

Cuesta now became as eager and enterprising as on the previous day he had been cautious and immovable; and dividing his army into two columns, he pressed on after the retreating French as far as El Bravo on the road to Madrid, and Cevolla on the road to Toledo. Charles Stewart, with his usual busy restlessness, also led two squadrons of German hussars forward without orders as far as Santa Olalla, where he encountered the enemy's rear-guard in force, and ascertained that their main body had taken the road to Toledo. These two squadrons were promptly withdrawn by Wellesley's order; and General Sherbrooke was directed to send on no more troops, even if Cuesta should ask for them. The British General thought it extremely probable that the hasty advance of the Spaniards might lead them into trouble, but he now put into execution the threat written to O'Donju on the 16th, and declined to proceed farther until he should be furnished with animals for his transport. He complained that for two days his troops had been in want of victuals, whereas the Spaniards had plenty and the French troops were well-fed; and it seems indubitable that the British were in a state of starvation, whereas the French in Talavera had been so wasteful that they had actually built their huts of ripe wheat.<sup>2</sup> But it seems also that the inexperience of the British Commissaries was responsible for at least a part of the difficulty, and that those officers were indisposed rather than the contrary to the zealous fulfilment of their duty, owing to the violent language used to them by some of the

<sup>1</sup> Napier, ii. 373.

<sup>2</sup> Munster, p. 35.



1809. Generals, and notably by Sherbrooke.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the  
July 24. Spanish army also was falling short of provisions, less apparently owing to actual dearth than to the difficulty of procuring animals to carry corn from the fertile Vera de Plasencia. Cuesta's staff, meanwhile, seems to have done its best, for O'Donaju made over to Wellesley some captured biscuit; and Wellesley, on his side, very evidently did not make want of supplies a mere pretext for not working with Cuesta, for he professed himself ready to join the Spaniards immediately upon receiving the biscuit aforesaid. It should seem, therefore, that there was nothing underhand in the behaviour of the two Commanders towards one another; though there was something very mysterious about Cuesta's unwillingness to fight on the 23rd, and his sudden ardour in following up the French after Victor's retreat. The latter point is, however, explained by the fact that the Supreme Junta had given secret orders to Venegas to assume the Captainship-general of New Castile upon his entry into Madrid, and to nominate the principal military and civil officials from among his own officers. It is no wonder that, having knowledge of this intrigue, Cuesta was anxious to reach Madrid before Venegas.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the French plans on the sides both of Plasencia and Toledo were slowly accomplishing

<sup>1</sup> It seems to have been in this campaign that Sherbrooke (not Craufurd, as is frequently said) threatened to hang a Commissary, who thereupon complained to Wellesley, and was duly informed that he had better comply with Sherbrooke's requisitions, since, if that General had threatened to hang him, he would certainly do so. On the present occasion, however, Sherbrooke had gone no further than to call Commissary Melville an impertinent scoundrel and threaten to knock him down. General Payne likewise called Asst.-Commissary Moore "a d——d scoundrel." *Wellington MSS.*, Sherbrooke to Wellesley, 16th July; Commissary Melville to Wellesley, 14th July. The aggrieved Commissaries appealed to Wellesley, but obtained little consolation. Yet see *Wellington Desps.*, Wellington to Sherbrooke, 15th July 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Frere and Castlereagh, 24th July; to O'Donaju and Sherbrooke, 26th July 1809. *Arteche*, vi. 358-359.

themselves. Mortier's corps had reached Salamanca 1809. on the 23rd ; though Ney, thinking that Soult's orders pointed to an invasion of Portugal, deferred obedience to them until their true purport had been explained to him. On the 24th Foy arrived at Soult's headquarters with Joseph's new commands ; whereupon the Marshal directed the whole of Ney's corps to march to Salamanca, and bade such troops of his own corps as were not already there to move thither from Toro on the 25th without a halt. On the side of the Tagus, Joseph, while at Naval Carnero on his march southward, was met on the 23rd by Victor's report of his retreat, and at once turned the direction of his march away from Talavera towards Toledo. On the 25th Sebastiani entered Toledo ; Victor took up a position on the east bank of the river Guadarrama, about ten miles to west of that city ; and Joseph reached Vargas about ten miles to north of it. Thus the First and Fourth Corps, and the reserve from Madrid, were successfully concentrated, with a total strength of some forty-six thousand men.

What, then, had befallen Venegas that the French should so completely have ignored his presence ? On the 14th, while at Santa Cruz de Mudela, some ninety miles south and east of Toledo, he had received commands from the Supreme Junta at Seville to draw the enemy's attention to his side, but without compromising himself. On the 15th at the same place there reached him orders from Cuesta already mentioned, which bade him concentrate his troops at Madrideojos on the 17th and 18th ; whence, if unopposed by a larger force than ten thousand men, he was to advance by Tembleque, Ocaña, and Tarancón, so that by the 21st or 22nd his vanguard should have reached Fuentidueña on the Upper Tagus, or even Arganda, little more than twelve miles south-east of Madrid ; the whole manœuvre being undertaken, of course, as part of the general operations of the Allied army on the Tagus, which, as he was told, would move on the 18th or 19th. Thus beset with

1809. conflicting orders, Venegas on the 16th pushed his  
July 16. troops forward from their cantonments along the various roads to the north by Arenas, the pass of Lapiche, Villarta, Villarrubia, and Herencia, only to find the four last-named occupied by the enemy. Since the two first of these four directly blocked the road to Madridejos and the two others flanked it, he decided, after consultation with a council of war, that to proceed farther would be to compromise himself, and sent a message to the Junta for instructions. Three  
July 19. days were lost before on the 19th the Junta's answer arrived, bidding him continue his advance, since the armies on the Tagus were absolutely dependent upon his co-operation; but this he was to do only upon receiving certain intelligence of their progress, and after assuring himself that the enemy in his front had not been reinforced to a dangerous strength. Venegas thereupon cantoned his troops along the line Ciudad Real, Daimiel, Manzanares, Membrilla, and La Solana, with advanced posts across the Guadiana on his left at Fuente el Fresno and Malagón; and there he sat still, listening gladly to exaggerated tales of Sebastiani's strength, without an attempt to disturb him. At  
July 24. length on the 24th, upon learning that the enemy was disappearing from his front, he moved forward irresolutely, hesitating whether to follow Sebastiani to Toledo or to march upon Madrid. Some excuse may be made for his previous inaction, looking to the contradictory orders that he had received; but even the Junta had bidden him to distract Sebastiani's attention to his own quarter, and this he absolutely neglected to do.  
July 25. In the meantime Wellesley on the 25th stationed the divisions of Sherbrooke and Mackenzie with two regiments of cavalry on the farther bank of the Alberche about Cazalegas, in order to maintain communication with Wilson at Escalona, and with Cuesta. The Spanish General, still full of ardour in the pursuit, had pushed his army on to Torrijos within fifteen miles of

Toledo, when to his surprise he learned that over forty 1809. thousand French were in his front. Reluctantly enough he resolved to retreat; and Wellesley, who had ridden forward to choose a new position in lieu of that of Cazalegas, upon hearing of his determination, made preparations to send Sherbrooke's and Mackenzie's divisions on to Cevolla in case the French should advance. He hoped that the French would now take the offensive, and he was not disappointed. Finding that Cuesta only was opposed to them, King Joseph and his Marshals resolved to attack at once; and on the morning of the 26th they marched upon Torrijos, July 26. where Cuesta had left the division of Zayas and two regiments of cavalry to cover his retreat.

Zayas seems to have begun his own retrograde movement in fair order; but the French cavalry, following him up sharply, cut one of his two regiments of horse to pieces. After this the infantry appear to have run in disorder to Alcabon, where they rallied under cover of Alburquerque's division of cavalry, which had come forward to save them. Victor thereupon halted his advanced guard, and the troops composing it dispersed to gather forage. It is strange that the Marshal did not show greater energy against the retiring Spaniards, for they had been much shaken by the first onset, and the retreat even of the main body was conducted in such confusion as greatly to resemble a flight.<sup>1</sup> The French infantry, it is true, was far in rear, but the cavalry numbered five thousand sabres to Alburquerque's three thousand, to say nothing of infinite superiority in quality. Had the pursuit been pressed with ardour, there can be little doubt that it would have met with but slight resistance until checked by the British, and might have so scattered Cuesta's army as to put it out of action for a month. Victor's excuse was that the horses were tired. This may have been true of Merlin's division, one thousand

<sup>1</sup> There can, I think, be no doubt of this from the joint testimony of Napier, Leslie, and Munster.

1809. strong, which had marched up with Sebastiani, but can  
July 26. hardly have been so of Latour Maubourg's, which of itself outnumbered Alburquerque's. Be this as it may, Victor halted for some hours at Alcabon, and moved no farther that day than to Santa Olalla. Cuesta therefore continued his disorderly retreat unmolested to the banks of the Alberche, where Wellesley had brought forward Sherbrooke's division to cover the passage over the bridge. About five o'clock in the evening the British General rode out and begged Cuesta to take his army across the river while there was yet time, lest he should be attacked in the morning with the stream in his rear. Cuesta at the time was fast asleep in his tent on the left bank of the Alberche, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that Wellesley obtained access to him, to be met by a resolute refusal.<sup>1</sup> Some sympathy may perhaps be felt with the proud old man in his unwillingness to allow his demoralised troops to file to the rear before the scornful eyes of the British.

During the hours that followed, Wellesley renewed his entreaties to Cuesta, who, thinking to humiliate his colleague, resisted until the British General indulged him by beseeching consent upon his knees, after which he gave the order to cross the Alberche. When the  
July 27. British stood to their arms an hour before dawn the movement had already begun; and at a little past nine Wellesley sent orders to Sherbrooke to withdraw his division, leaving, however, Mackenzie's division and Anson's cavalry still on the left bank of the river. The Spaniards and the rest of the army were already streaming away to a position which had caught the eye of the British Commander, and of him alone, a little farther to the west. The ground which Victor had occupied on the Alberche, though strong for an army facing west, was very much the reverse for one facing east; that which the British had taken up before Victor's retreat was even worse, the right bank being completely commanded by the left; and Wellesley had

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sir S. Whittingham*, p. 86.

already condemned both as hopelessly bad.<sup>1</sup> The new 1809. position was so much better that even Cuesta was ready July 27. to accept it.

The country between the Alberche and Talavera, a distance of from three to four miles, is flat and covered with crops of corn, interspersed with vines and olives and studded with evergreen oaks; but about a mile and a quarter to north of the town the ground begins to rise, slowly at first, and then more abruptly, into a chain of hills which runs from east to west. The western end of the range bears the name of the Cerro de Medellin, and the eastern that of the Cerro de Cascajal. The two ridges are divided by a brook called the Portiña, which rises some three miles and a half to north-east of Talavera, and after running from two to three miles in a general direction of east to west, turns almost at a right angle to southward and bores its way, as has been said, between the Cerros of Medellin and Cascajal. The brook is generally dry in the summer but for a few stagnant pools; and its course over the plain is so straight and shallow as to present no obstacle, though it furnishes a useful natural entrenchment for infantry. North of the Cerros an open plain,<sup>2</sup> which I shall call the northern plain, slopes gently upward for half a mile to a chain of rugged mountains, called the Sierra de Segurilla, where the Portiña takes its rise,

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to O'Donoju, 25th, 26th July 1809.

<sup>2</sup> This plain is described as a valley by all writers from Wellesley to Mr. Oman, so I am aware of my temerity in calling it by any other name. Nevertheless, a valley, as I conceive it, signifies ground which is lowest towards its centre, which this most certainly is not; for it is lowest at its southern margin, from whence it rises steadily to north. The Portiña hugs the southern margin aforesaid, where the Cerro de Cascajal checks its further progress southward; but two tiny tributaries, one of which played an important part in the action, run into it with a course due north and south straight across the so-called valley; and indeed such is the general and natural tendency of all the waters. Now waters do not cross a valley; they follow it. Therefore the space between the Cerros de Medellin and Cascajal and the Sierra de Segurilla is not a valley but a plain. The point may seem a small one; but I was greatly struck by it when I went over the ground.

1809. mountains so steep and rocky that they may well have July 27. been regarded as inaccessible.

Here was the position chosen by Wellesley in which to receive the French attack. Its right rested upon the Tagus and the town of Talavera, which, being solidly built and in part enclosed by a stout wall, almost served the purpose of a fortification. In advance of the eastern front of the town was a chapel of good construction upon a small knoll, where Spanish guns had been placed in battery to command the road from the bridge of the Alberche on the east, and to rake the plain to the north. From the town northward for a full mile the position was assigned to the Spaniards, their extreme left being marked by a low eminence,<sup>1</sup> called the Pajar de Vergara, about two hundred yards ahead of the Portiña. The ground, though level, was extremely strong. The whole of the front was covered by a tangle of small enclosures, mud-walls, vineyards, and felled trees, so blind that in these days of dispersed formation it would be advantageous to an attacking force, but in those days of serried ranks made the defence almost impregnable. In rear of this the natural entrenchment of the Portiña furnished shelter for Cuesta's first line; in rear of the Portiña the road from Segurilla, which runs parallel to it and was embanked, afforded cover for his second line; and having thirty-two thousand troops to man a mile of front, he was able to hold a division of infantry, ten regiments of cavalry, and several guns in reserve.

From the Pajar de Vergara northward the British took up the line, the mound itself being strengthened by a low parapet, under shelter of which was installed Lawson's battery of three-pounders. Behind and beside the mound lay Campbell's division, with Campbell's brigade<sup>2</sup> in first line, Kemmis's<sup>3</sup> in second line,

<sup>1</sup> Arteche calls it "poco perceptible," but without being conspicuous it is easily found and quite unmistakable.

<sup>2</sup> 2/7th, 2/53rd.

<sup>3</sup> 1/40th, 97th, 2nd batt. detachments.

and Cotton's brigade of dragoons in support.<sup>1</sup> The <sup>1809.</sup> ground in front of this division was strong and enclosed ; <sup>July 27.</sup> but from its left flank northward it was perfectly open and covered with long grass. Here were stationed the battalions of Sherbrooke's division, the Guards on the right, Cameron's brigade next to them, and then a vacant space for the four battalions of Germans, which, owing to the mistake of a staff-officer, had been led for a full hour's march beyond Talavera before they could be recalled. The position of Sherbrooke's division was wrong. Wellesley had evidently intended that Mackenzie's division should stand next to the left of Campbell's, and that Sherbrooke's division should form the first line upon the Cerro de Medellin, with the Germans on the right, the Guards in the post of danger on the extreme left, and Hill's division in second line. Sherbrooke, however, doubtless conceiving that he was doing right, drew up his four battalions upon the left of Campbell, with results that, as shall be seen, were very nearly disastrous.

A word must now be said as to the Cerro de Medellin itself. The general trend of the ridge, as we have seen, is from east to west ; and, as the line of battle ran from north to south, it follows that the British position embraced only the eastern end of it. From the south the ascent rises gradually for about a thousand yards to a broad shoulder, leaps up suddenly and steeply for another four hundred yards, descends rather more steeply to another shoulder on the north side, and from thence melts gradually down into the northern plain. Thus a section taken across the eastern end would present very much the appearance of a shamrock without a stalk. On its eastern front, where it abuts on the Portiña, the hill grows steadily steeper as one ascends the water ; and for about three-quarters of a mile the front of the British position may be truly described as a deep ravine, the ground plunging abruptly for twenty or thirty yards down to the stream

<sup>1</sup> 14th and 16th L.D.



1809. in a declivity so steep that it would be imprudent for a July 27. man to ride down it except perfectly straight.<sup>1</sup> The opposite ascent to the Cerro de Cascajal is fully as abrupt, but the Cerro de Cascajal itself is rather lower than the Cerro de Medellin, and is therefore dominated by it. Nevertheless, at its summit the Cerro de Cascajal offers a broad plateau of little less elevation, where guns could be massed not only to command the lower slopes of the opposite hill, but even to enfilade troops upon the lower features to the south. It is very obvious that the Cerro de Medellin was the key of Wellesley's position, and that its central peak was the key of the Medellin.

Returning now to the Alberche, the French columns began to appear about noon, whereupon the British cavalry and Mackenzie's division fell back from their position at Cazalegas, setting fire to the French huts before they moved. Crossing the river at a ford, the British infantry made its way through a wood to an old ruined house called the Casa de Salinas, which stood in a cleared space by the road that leads from Talavera north-eastward to the village of Cardiel. Here the division halted, with Donkin's brigade in advance and Mackenzie's in rear, but, as the sequel proved, without taking any proper precautions for its security. The men of Donkin's brigade were lying down comfortably in the shade, when they were suddenly startled by a volley which killed several before they could rise from the ground; Lapisse's division, which led the march of Victor's corps, having passed the ford unobserved under cover of the smoke from the burning huts, and stolen in upon the British before their presence was even suspected. For a time there was wild confusion amounting to panic in part of the surprised brigade. The Eighty-seventh and Eighty-eighth ran back, firing wildly at each other; though the Sixtieth, which seems to have been a little isolated from them, stood firm.

<sup>1</sup> I find that when I went over the ground in May 1903 I compared the ravine to the head of acombe on Exmoor. This may help to give the reader some idea of it.

An aide-de-camp flew to Wellesley to report the mishap; and the General, galloping with all speed to the spot, scrambled up the ruined walls of the Casa de Salinas to see what was going forward. He had hardly done so before the enemy's sharp-shooters came swarming round the building, and he barely escaped capture by jumping down and remounting his horse in all haste. He now made his way to Mackenzie's brigade, which was standing firm, and addressed the Colonel of the Forty-fifth; but, even while he was speaking, two musket-balls struck the Colonel's sword and another passed through his cap. Wasting, therefore, no further time, the General ordered the brigade to retire from the right of companies through the wood in the rear, and re-formed the ranks in the plain on the western side just in time to meet the heads of the French columns, which were pressing on fiercely in pursuit. A sharp action ensued while the two broken battalions were rallying in rear of Mackenzie's brigade, but the enemy was decisively checked. The Thirty-first, though only a second battalion, behaved remarkably well, bearing apparently the brunt of the fight, for it lost over one hundred killed and wounded. The Forty-fifth, a tough old regiment, was never shaken for a moment. The Sixtieth also was steadfast and formed a rallying-point for the rest of Donkin's brigade. With some trouble order was restored, the enemy was held back, the discomfited battalions recovered themselves, and the whole then retreated across the plain, covered by Anson's brigade of cavalry, with Cotton's and Fane's brigades in support. The casualties of the British in this affair were little short of four hundred and fifty of all ranks, of whom nearly one hundred were prisoners. The Eighty-seventh lost nearly two hundred men, of whom thirty-four were taken, and the Eighty-eighth sixty-four, of whom thirty were taken. The French probably suffered far less heavily; and altogether the incident made an unpleasant opening to the campaign.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is extremely difficult to discover how Mackenzie's division

1809. As the division retreated, it was followed by a  
 July 27. constant fire from the French horse-artillery; and it was past four o'clock before it reached Wellesley's chosen position. Mackenzie's brigade formed up in rear of the Guards, while Donkin's took up the ground on the left of the Guards, which should have been occupied by the Germans. By this time the British troops, some of which had not moved from Talavera until past four o'clock, were in their appointed stations, and the artillery had been distributed along the line; Lawson's three-pounder battery on the knoll of Pajar de Vergara; Elliott's in front of the brigade of Guards; Heise's on the southern slopes of the Cerro de Medellin; Rettberg's heavy six-pounders on the same hill; and Sillery's behind the British centre. The cavalry was massed likewise in rear of the centre. Only on the extreme left, the most important point, were the dispositions still incomplete and imperfect. Wellesley had himself brought in Mackenzie's division, but as soon as he had done so, he seems to have betaken himself to the Spaniards on the right. He did this not without good reason, for in virtue of a natural ascendancy he had tacitly taken command of both armies; and General O'Donoju had ridden in from the Alberche in a state of nervous excitement, which could not have been reassuring to his men.<sup>1</sup> The

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was disposed at the time of the attack, but I have relied in this account chiefly upon the narrative of Whittingham, who was present at the time (*Life of Sir S. Whittingham*, p. 86). The Eighty-eighth claims, in Cannon's record, to have earned the praise of Donkin by its conduct on this occasion through the support which it gave to the advanced troops, adding circumstantial details in confirmation of the fact. Experience has taught me to receive such statements of regimental histories with caution. Both Charles Stewart and Lord Munster, eye-witnesses, speak highly of the behaviour of the Thirty-first, but the former mentions that the Eighty-eighth, though its casualties were small, was disordered by the attack (*Londonderry MSS.*, C. Stewart to Castlereagh, 31st July 1809). The Eighty-seventh was evidently the regiment upon which the first French volley fell most heavily, for it lost over 150 killed and wounded, including 11 officers.

<sup>1</sup> Leith-Hay, p. 103.

confusion must have been great, for Colonel Whittingham, unable to find the commander of one Spanish division, assumed the charge of it himself, and was obeyed with a readiness which showed that no one knew what to do.<sup>1</sup> But for Wellesley's presence the entire Spanish army would probably have taken to its heels.

In the absence of the Commander-in-Chief there appears to have been some uncertainty as to his wishes among the British divisional generals, so much so that Hill, late in the evening, rode off to Talavera to find Wellesley; and in the meantime the various brigades on the left seem to have disposed themselves as follows. Hill parked his one battery on the reverse side of the Cerro de Medellin, with Tilson's brigade far back on the northern slope, and Stewart's as far back on the southern; and, since he considered himself to be in second line, he cannot be blamed. Donkin, seeing no troops on the Cerro de Medellin, led his brigade thither, and stationed it high up on the eastern slope. Having been on foot for fifteen hours on an extremely hot day, suffering heavy loss and undergoing a very trying retreat in face of the enemy, the two younger battalions of this brigade were probably not only fatigued, but shaken, and Donkin might reasonably have expected that no very severe duty would be required of them. It does not appear, however, that any staff-officer indicated to him the post selected for his brigade, but that he simply occupied the only vacant place that he could find. Finally, the Germans came in at eight o'clock, and made their way to Donkin's right, the First battalion being next to Cameron's brigade, the Second on the left of the First, and then in succession the Seventh and the Fifth. The Germans must also have been weary, for they had been hurried back to the position in hot haste; and, being under the delusion that Hill's division was in their front, they lay down, and many of them went to

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Sir S. Whittingham*, p. 88.

1809. sleep. Thus there was hardly any first line at all July 27. on the key of the position, while the key of keys on the summit was practically, if not actually, unoccupied.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Victor, elated by his first success against Mackenzie's division, had brought the rest of his corps across the Alberche, and deployed it in the plain. Ruffin's division of infantry was on the right, with Villatte's in its rear; that of Lapisse was on the left, following the track of Mackenzie, with Beaumont's two regiments of cavalry in support; while, to the left of Lapisse, Latour-Maubourg's division of cavalry extended across the plain nearly to the road from the bridge of the Alberche, which was the place assigned to the Fourth Corps. Sebastiani's troops, however, were as yet far in rear, and only Merlin's cavalry had crossed the river and was moving towards the Spaniards.

<sup>1</sup> It is extremely difficult to discover exactly what happened on the evening of the 27th. Napier and Mr. Oman, following Wellesley's despatch, say that Donkin's brigade was drawn up in rear of the Germans. But the Germans did not come into the line until 8 P.M. and then formed, by their own account, upon Donkin's right (*Beamish*, i. 207). It is absolutely certain that they cannot have been in front of Donkin, or the French, in the attack shortly to be described, must have passed through them to get at the British. Moreover, Napier (*Battles of the Peninsula*) says distinctly that Donkin took up his station on the hill, and "thus accidentally filled the position." So in spite of the assertion in Wellesley's memo. on the battle of Talavera, that "the German Legion were on the left of the position" in the first line, it seems that the order of the British first line from right to left was—A. Campbell's brigade, Guard's brigade, Cameron's, Langwerth's, Low's, Donkin's. That Hill's brigades considered themselves to be in second line is shown by Leslie, p. 142. Mr. Oman places Tilson's brigade on the right (southern) and Stewart's on the left (northern) flank of the reverse slope, and half a mile in rear of their place in the line of battle. But from the narrative of Leslie they can hardly have been so far back, for they were within range of round shot from the French field-guns; and it is evident from the narratives both of Leslie and Leith-Hay that Stewart's brigade was on the right and Tilson's on the left, which indeed would be the place of precedence in the division of the extreme left. That the Germans considered themselves to be in second line appears from Munster's account, p. 38.

It seems to have been at seven o'clock or rather later 1809. that some of Ruffin's infantry seized on the Cerro July 27. de Cascajal, and French batteries unlimbering upon the height opened fire, while simultaneously Merlin's dragoons rode up to the Spanish centre and discharged their pistols to make the Spaniards show themselves. The Spaniards thereupon fired a terrific volley of musketry from end to end of the line; after which four battalions on Cuesta's extreme left raised the cry of treason, threw down their arms, and rushed away to the rear, stopping only to plunder the British camp as they passed.<sup>1</sup> Many of the commissaries and other non-combatants of the British, with some few malingering soldiers and at least one combatant officer, joined them in their flight; but by a wholesome irony of fate they encountered Craufurd's light brigade in full march for Talavera, and did not enjoy the meeting. Happily the panic spread no further, and Cuesta, having sent out Albuquerque's cavalry to sweep the fugitives back, announced his intention of decimating them, a sentence which, at Wellesley's intervention, he reduced to the execution of one man in twenty.

But meanwhile Victor had noticed that the Cerro de Medellin was only weakly held by Donkin's brigade and that its summit was not held at all; and knowing the ground well, he determined, without consulting Joseph, to endeavour to seize it by surprise as soon as night should have fallen. Severe criticism has been passed upon him for this resolution, and nothing is more likely than that he wished to secure all credit of a possible success for himself; but at the same time

<sup>1</sup> This panic took place under Wellesley's eye, he being with Campbell's brigade of the line. It is small wonder that he had taken his station there instead of on the left (Wellesley to Castlereagh, 25th August 1809). As the Spaniards began to fire he said to Whittingham, "If they will but fire as well to-morrow, the day is our own; but as there seems to be nobody to fire at just now, I wish you would stop it." . . . "Only look," he added, after the flight of the four battalions, "at the ugly hole those fellows have left. I wish you would go to the second line and try to fill it up" (*Life of Sir S. Whittingham*, p. 88).

1809. it must be admitted that, looking to the recent panic  
July 27. among the Spaniards, the temptation was great. Yet he can hardly have thought that the British would make no attempt to recover such a position, and he must have been aware that there was a chance of bringing on a general action before the whole of the French army had come up. However that may be, he withdrew his guns shortly after eight o'clock, and ordered Ruffin's division of three regiments, each of three battalions, to advance to the attack at nine. Of these regiments the 24th was to follow the northern plain round the left flank of the British position and ascend the height from the north; the 9th Light was to cross the Portiña at its deepest point and deliver an assault directly in front; and the 96th was to pass the brook farther to the south and envelop the hill on the southern side.

The night was dark, and the 24th, going astray on the northern plain, never came into action at all. The 9th, more fortunate than its neighbour, managed to cross the Portiña<sup>1</sup> without mishap, ascended the hill, stumbled upon a party of German riflemen who were returning from outpost-duty on the summit, drove them back upon the Seventh line battalion, which promptly fired upon its comrades. The 9th then plunged straight into the middle of Low's brigade, surprising and for the time breaking both battalions.<sup>2</sup> The Seventh lost more than a fourth of its feeble strength, seventy men being killed and wounded, and a rather greater number made prisoners; while the Fifth battalion, lying more out of the track of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman says "chancing on the place where the ravine was most easily negotiable"; but I remember no such place till one gets clear of the hills on the north. Possibly the 9th prudently went round the head of the ravine, followed the road from Segurilla round the eastern face of the hill, and then turned upward.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Oman puts the Seventh battalion on the left (north) of Low's brigade. If it had been so it would have been out of its place; and as it was not so on the 28th, I do not think it can have been so on the 27th.

French column, escaped with forty casualties, but 1809. could not for some time be rallied. The French July 27. 9th, therefore, pressing on, soon reached the summit, swept from it the outlying picquet of Stewart's brigade, and thus actually seized the key of Wellesley's position. Meanwhile the first fusillade of the Germans had alarmed the British generals; and Sherbrooke, who could see the flashes on the summit, divined what was going forward. He therefore wheeled Cameron's brigade into open column,<sup>1</sup> and was about to order it to storm the hill when he perceived that the work had been already taken in hand by Hill.

Roused like Sherbrooke by the sound of the firing, but judging from the sudden silence which followed the dispersion of the Germans that it was only a false alarm, Hill was giving orders to Stewart's brigade to support Low's, when he observed men on the top of the hill firing towards him. Imagining that "it was the Old Buffs as usual making some blunder," he galloped up the hill with his brigade-major, shouting to the men to cease firing, and found himself in the midst of the French. A voltigeur, laying hold of him, called on him to surrender; but Hill, spurring his horse, broke away from the man, and galloped down again under a volley which wounded the animal and killed his brigade-major. Upon reaching Stewart's brigade he at once formed it into open column of companies, left in front, and led it to the attack; the battalion of detachments being at the head, and then in succession the Twenty-ninth and Forty-eighth.<sup>2</sup> The detachments came first

<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic of the pedantry of the drill in those days that this simple manœuvre could not be executed without facing the brigade in the wrong direction, so that Sherbrooke intended to face about and assault with the rear rank in front. Munster, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> As Leslie points out, this was the wrong order (p. 145). The Forty-eighth, being the left-hand battalion, should have led, the detachments should have followed, and the Twenty-ninth brought up the rear. Hill evidently handled his brigade better than Sherbrooke, for apparently each battalion formed column of companies upon the left flank company before it moved off.



1809. into action, but were checked and, grumbling loudly, fell  
July 27. back, less from want of good will to fight than from lack of good leading and from the incoherence inseparable from their composition.<sup>1</sup> The Twenty-ninth thereupon pushed their way through them, and charged up the hill; when the leading company, first pouring in its volley at close range and then dashing in with the bayonet, cleared the enemy off the summit and drove them headlong down the slope. This done, the Twenty-ninth wheeled into line, and advancing obliquely along the eastern face of the hill, came upon the flank of the reserve battalion of the 9th Light as it was climbing to the top. Taken at hopeless disadvantage, this unlucky column was utterly defeated in a few minutes; and it was driven down in disorder to the Portiña to join the two battalions which had already been discomfited, and to retreat with them to the Cerro de Cascajal.

This brought the action to an end. The 96th regiment of the French Line only with difficulty and delay made its way across the Portiña, where it encountered Langwerth's brigade of the German Legion, and after exchanging with it for some time a desultory fire, with little harm to either party, retired upon ascertaining the failure of the principal attack. The whole affair, including losses from the French cannonade, cost Wellesley's army rather fewer than four hundred killed, wounded, and missing, more than half of whom belonged to Low's brigade of the German Legion. The loss of the French cannot be ascertained, but was probably greater, for the 9th Light must have suffered severely. No praise can be too high for the Twenty-ninth, which practically defeated all three battalions of

<sup>1</sup> "I wish these detachment battalions were replaced. I am sure they are the cause of great disorder—no *esprit de corps* for their interior economy among them, though they will all fight. They are careless of all else, and the officers do not look to their temporary field-officers and superiors under whom they are placed, as in an established regiment. I see much of their indiscipline." Ch. Stewart to Castlereagh, 15th June 1809, *Londonderry MSS.*

the French 9th single-handed, and thus decisively established the superiority of the British troops over their enemies. If the remainder of Ruffin's division had fulfilled the duty assigned to them, the contest would have been longer and sharper, but the result could hardly have been different; for Sherbrooke might have reinforced Langwerth's brigade without difficulty on the British right, and there were Tilson's as well as Donkin's men at hand to deal with any attack on the left. Moreover, Victor could not have thrown in reinforcements as speedily as Wellesley, having so troublesome an obstacle as the ravine of the Portiña in his way. For this reason the Marshal's attack must stand condemned; but it cannot be said that the incident was in general creditable to the Allies, and least of all to Wellesley's staff. It was not a good preparation for a battle that the key of the position should have been occupied in so haphazard a fashion, and that the brigadiers should not have known whether their troops stood in first or second line.

The firing had brought Wellesley to the Cerro de Medellin, when he at once ordered Rettberg's battery to ascend the hill, and redistributed the troops so far as the darkness would permit. The Twenty-ninth, having flaunted its colours on the summit, was allowed to remain in the position thus proudly won, and formed the extreme left of the whole line, with the First battalion of detachments and the Forty-eighth in succession upon its right.<sup>1</sup> On the right of Stewart's brigade, Tilson's carried the front line over the highest parts of the hill, from whence it was prolonged by the two brigades of the German Legion, which now took their correct place on the left of Sherbrooke's division, with Donkin's brigade in their rear. Picquets and sentries were pushed forward almost in excessive numbers to the edge of the ravine, so close to the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman observes that this was not the proper order of the brigade in respect of seniority. He may be right, but in the left brigade of a division the left was the place of honour. Leith-Hay, p. 104.

1809. enemy that they could hear the French sentinels  
July 27. challenging their visiting rounds. The young soldiers, shaken by the surprise of the first French advance, were nervous and unsteady. The men in front were constantly discharging their muskets; and on at least one occasion the troops in line fired upon their own picquets, killing and wounding both officers and men. At midnight the Spaniards on the right suddenly opened a terrific fire upon an imaginary foe; and it is certain that Wellesley and others believed that at about the same time the French attempted a second attack on the Cerro de Medellin.<sup>1</sup>

July 28. While the darkness lasted, torches were observed to be moving on the Cerro de Cascajal, where the noise of wheels and the cracking of whips told that the enemy was bringing guns into position. Between one and two o'clock the moon rose, and by its rays black masses could be distinguished moving into place. Having failed in his attack upon the Cerro de Medellin by night, Victor was determined to renew it by day, and, in order to force the hands of his superiors, was pushing his troops so far forward as almost to compel an engagement. He persisted in treating the capture of the hill as an isolated enterprise which, when accomplished, might lead to more serious things. Jourdan, with sounder understanding, condemned any such partial action, and both he and Joseph were for waiting in their position on the Alberche until Soult should have had time to march

<sup>1</sup> Arteché, upon the evidence of various writers, decides that this second attack must have been made. The French deny it, and Leslie and Leith-Hay of the Twenty-ninth say nothing about it, though the former speaks of picquets of French appearing at various places, firing a volley, and disappearing. Possibly these were some stray parties of the French 24th of the Line, which could not find their corps. All English writers who passed the night before the battle of Talavera upon the spot, agree that it was one of extreme disquietude and unrest. Even Wellesley, who, with his staff around him, was lying on the ground in rear of the British position, made constant inquiries as to the hour, betraying his anxiety for the coming of dawn.

down upon Wellesley's rear. But Victor was urgent; 1809. and, fearing lest he should report them to Napoleon July 28. for neglecting to defeat the British, the King and the chief of his staff yielded their own good judgment to the bluster of their self-sufficient subordinate. Victor thereupon gave his orders to his troops. Ignoring with doubtful wisdom the fact that Ruffin's division had failed during the night and that one of its regiments had been very roughly handled, he again selected it to execute the principal attack, directing that the divisions of Villatte and Lapisse should not move until the Cerro de Medellin had been won. Joseph, carrying on this vicious principle of throwing troops into action piecemeal, declared that the Fourth Corps should not move until the operations of the First Corps should promise success. Thus dissidence among commanders, as usual, prepared defeat.

At length the dawn flushed up. Wellesley rode out with his staff to the rear of the Twenty-ninth on the summit of the Cerro de Medellin, and gazed long and earnestly at the French array. To his left front, extending to the southern margin of the northern plain,<sup>1</sup> Ruffin's division stood on the brink of the ravine, massed in heavy columns, with skirmishers out ready for the attack which, according to the statement of deserters from the French army, was to be delivered at daybreak. On the summit of the Cerro de Cascajal stood Villatte's division, with thirty guns massed before it, and Beaumont's two divisions of cavalry in support. On the left of Villatte lay the division of Lapisse, with Latour-Maubourg's dragoons in their rear; and next to Lapisse, but not yet brought into the fighting line, was the Fourth Corps. Far in rear by the Casa de Salinas lay King Joseph with the reserve of his own

<sup>1</sup> Rather to the left (*i.e.* to north) of the hill" (Munster, p. 43). "On the brink of the ravine with reserves in its rear, with field-batteries on both flanks" (Leslie, p. 146). "To the right of the French cannon were perceived columns of infantry" (Leith-Hay, p. 106). Such are the conflicting accounts of the French array given by three observers on the Cerro de Medellin.

1809. Guard of cavalry and infantry, Dessolle's brigade of July 28. infantry and two squadrons of mounted chasseurs. Of the French artillery, thirty guns, as we have seen, were massed before Villatte's division on the Cerro de Cascajal, as many more were on the southern slopes of the hill, and the remainder were distributed among the Fourth Corps.<sup>1</sup> Allowing for the losses in previous engagements since the armies had been in contact, the French had between forty-five and forty-six thousand men on the field, including nearly five thousand cavalry, with eighty guns; the Spaniards about thirty-two thousand with thirty guns; and the British something over twenty-two thousand of all ranks with thirty guns. As compared with the Allies, therefore, the French were forty-five thousand to fifty-five thousand, but as compared with the British only, they were nearly two to one; while in artillery they were greatly superior not only in number of guns but in weight of metal. Moreover, it is beyond question that at least thirty thousand French infantry were opposed to from sixteen to seventeen thousand British, the remainder, with the cavalry, being employed merely to contain the Spaniards.

About five o'clock a single gun on the Cerro de Cascajal gave the signal for the attack, whereupon the French batteries on the height opened a tremendous fire, both rapid and accurate, upon the opposite hill, from which Rettberg's solitary battery made a very

<sup>1</sup> There is some difficulty in arriving at the distribution of the French guns. They had certainly eighty altogether. Leith-Hay counted twenty-two on the crest of the Cerro de Cascajal, Munster thirty. Napier says that the guns of the First Corps were formed in one mass on the Cerro de Cascajal, but gives no number. Mr. Oman (p. 521) gives four batteries (24 guns) on the Cerro de Cascajal, and six more (36 guns) on the rolling ground to south, but later (p. 523) he speaks of 24 guns on the Cerro, and 30 to the south. I conceive myself that there were 30 guns on the Cerro de Cascajal, 36 distributed among the Fourth Corps, *i.e.* 3 batteries to each division of the first line, and 14, which number Joseph is known to have brought with him, in the Reserve. Sebastiani had left one battery at Toledo.

inadequate reply. Wellesley, therefore, withdrew the 1809. brigades of Stewart and Tilson behind the crest of the July 28. slope and ordered them to lie down; their front being covered by the light companies, which had been sent out as soon as dawn had broken. A light easterly breeze carried the smoke of the French guns full into the eyes of the British, effectually veiling the enemy's columns from view; but upon the first salvo the French skirmishers had been seen to dash forward and their columns to advance, so that Hill fully realised what was coming. He therefore sounded the recall to bring back his light troops; and the men presently appeared, filing slowly up the hill with all the regularity of a parade movement. "Damn their filing," shouted Hill, "let them come in anyhow"; but whether the words had any effect is not recorded.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the cannonade from the Cerro de Cascajal continued, the shot mostly passing over the heads of the Twenty-ninth, until the assaulting infantry had advanced so far up the hill that the French gunners, in order to spare their own troops, were fain to train their guns more to southward, tearing great gaps in the ranks of the right of Stewart's brigade.<sup>2</sup>

Ruffin had formed the regiments of his division in a different order from that observed on the previous evening, placing the 9th Light on the right to attack by way of the northern plain; the 24th in the centre; and the 96th on his left; the regiments being drawn up in close column of divisions, with a frontage of one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty men, and a depth of nine ranks.<sup>3</sup> Protected

<sup>1</sup> This, as Mr. Oman most opportunely reminds us, was one of the two occasions on which "Daddy" Hill was heard to swear. The fact shows that every one on the field, excepting Wellesley, was a little nervous.

<sup>2</sup> Leslie says that it was the Forty-eighth, on the right of the Twenty-ninth, which he observed suffering so heavily. He must have meant the battalion of detachments, whose casualties were very great.

<sup>3</sup> The French battalions were organised at this time into six companies, the normal formation being in three ranks; and a division

1809. almost to the last moment by the fire of their artillery,  
July 28. they suffered little during their advance up the slope, and were within but a short distance of the summit when the British were called to their feet to line the crest of the height. It was claimed for the 24th of the French Line that they actually carried the crown of the hill, and were on the point of taking four guns; in which case it should seem that they made their way towards the interval between the brigades of Stewart and Tilson. It appears tolerably certain that the general direction of the 24th and 96th was somewhat south of west instead of due west, and it is doubtful whether the 9th Light came into action at all. Having to pass into the northern plain the 9th would naturally be behind their fellows, and, moreover, they had been too severely beaten seven hours before to be very willing to come on.<sup>1</sup> However, that may be, there can be no doubt that the brunt of the assault fell on the centre and right of Stewart's brigade, which stood coolly until the French were within close range, and then poured in a volley which sharply checked their advance. Thereupon, as usual, a few brave Frenchmen continued to dash forward with the bayonet, and for the moment carried all before them, while the bulk of the columns strove to answer the British fire with their own. But a contest of musketry between a frontage of twelve very weak companies in triple rank and the converging fire of three battalions in line, only two ranks deep,

was a double company. We know for certain that each battalion was in close column of double companies, and I have assumed that each regiment was drawn up in line of battalion columns at close interval (six paces), but it is impossible to say whether this was really so. Taking the average strength of a battalion at 480, the front of each rank would be one-ninth of 480, or from fifty to sixty men.

<sup>1</sup> The casualties of the 9th in both attacks were less by over a hundred than those either of the 24th or the 96th in one attack. Moreover, Leith-Hay mentions that only the right wing of the British Twenty-ninth charged, from which it is to be inferred that the left wing was thrown back to watch the 9th Light. Lastly, it is certain the Twenty-ninth charged down to the ravine, while the 9th as certainly retired by the northern plain.

could have but one ending. Moreover, the 96th <sup>1809.</sup> was exposed not only to the volleys of Tilson's brigade, <sup>July 28.</sup> but to a flanking attack of the riflemen and Fifth battalion of the German Legion, which Sherbrooke had detached to assail their left. With front and flanks torn to tatters, the French wavered, and the British, charging with the bayonet, swept them down to the foot of the hill with frightful slaughter.

In the charge all order was lost. The British parted into small groups, fighting furiously with like groups of the enemy which still showed resistance ; and so eager was the pursuit that many of the red-coats crossed the ravine and hunted the fugitives back to their reserves. At the height of the turmoil by the Portiña a column of French infantry appeared on the southern flank of the confused masses of British, probably sent forward to cover the retreat of Ruffin's troops ; but with great exertions the pursuers were collected, a front was formed, and this enemy too was driven back. Meanwhile the 9th Light, seeing the failure of its brother-regiments, was retreating in disorder along the northern plain, where cavalry might have destroyed it ; but the British dragoons had been compelled to go far afield for forage and had not yet returned.<sup>1</sup> Unable to press the pursuit further, the British infantry fell back once more behind the crest of the Cerro de Medellin, not without loss from the enemy's cannon as they toiled up the ascent. The casualties of Hill's division numbered between seven and eight hundred, the battalion of detachments alone losing two hundred men ; and Hill himself was compelled by a wound in the head to leave the field and resign his command to Tilson. The casualties of Ruffin's division were very much heavier, those of the

<sup>1</sup> Arteché says that the cavalry was on the spot and that Wellesley ordered them to charge, but that they allowed the 9th to escape. Apart from the fact that the cavalry had not yet been moved up to the British left, the evidence of Munster (p. 45), of Londonderry (4to, p. 333), and of Napier (*Battles of the Peninsula*, p. 35) is conclusive against this statement, which is, moreover, quite unconfirmed.



1809. 24th and 96th alone amounting to forty officers and  
 July 28. over eleven hundred men killed and wounded, the whole of whom had fallen within the space of forty minutes.

After the repulse of the French, their cannon on the Cerro de Cascajal continued to play for a full hour, the shot falling fast among the burying parties, which, owing to the intense heat of the day, had been ordered to inter the dead that lay thick on the Cerro de Medellin. Gradually the fire slackened, and at about half-past eight ceased altogether. The men of Victor's corps were observed to be cooking their breakfasts ; and an informal truce was established by tacit consent, during which the officers and men of both armies wandered down to the ravine to drink the filthy water that festered in the pools of the Portiña, and mixed with each other in the most friendly way. Wellesley utilised this lull to make some changes in his dispositions. The repeated attack upon his left showed him that it was no longer safe to leave the northern plain open ; and he therefore moved Fane's and Anson's brigades of cavalry to the west side of the Cerro de Medellin, forming them with their front towards the plain ;<sup>1</sup> at the same time

<sup>1</sup> There are great discrepancies between the various reports as to the time when the Allied left was extended into and across the northern plain. Arteché makes it happen before Ruffin's second attack on the Cerro de Medellin, stating even that the Spanish infantry was sent to occupy the Sierra de Segurilla to oppose the 9th Light, some of whom were stationed there to aid in the attack on the Cerro. But in such a position, half a mile away, the 9th could have been of no possible service. Napier makes the movement follow directly after the failure of the French attack above named ; but, construing Wellesley's despatch unintelligently (as it seems to me), also mentions the presence of French light troops on the Sierra. Mr. Oman postpones the whole movement until Joseph had begun to make his dispositions for the final attack, but none the less makes Jourdan notice that it was in progress before Joseph had decided to make the final attack at all. This is obviously self-contradictory. Wellesley's despatch, though not so explicit as could be wished, shows clearly (1) that he moved the British cavalry into the northern plain after the repulse of Ruffin's second attack, and that it was supported by the cavalry of Alburquerque ; (2) that "the enemy

shifting two guns to one of the northern spurs of the hill to enfilade any enemy that might attempt to turn his left. Nor was the crest of the hill itself neglected, for Donkin's brigade was added to the two which had borne the brunt of the previous attack. 1809. July 28.

Meanwhile Victor had reported the result of his failure to Joseph ; and between nine and ten o'clock the King, with the whole of his staff, appeared on the summit of the Cerro de Cascajal to reconnoitre the position of the Allies. After a time he turned to Jourdan and asked his opinion as to the advisability of a general attack. The Marshal was opposed to it. A frontal assault (such is his account of his contention) could have small chance of success against superior numbers so strongly posted ; and Victor had let slip the opportunity of turning Wellesley's left. Had the Marshal made a demonstration against the right of the Allies, and massed a large force quietly under cover of night in the northern plain, then the Cerro de Medellin might

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*then placed light infantry* " on the Sierra de Segurilla, and that in consequence a Spanish division of infantry was brought up to oppose it. From this I infer that the British cavalry was moved to the northern plain *before* Joseph made any disposition for the final attack, but that the Spanish infantry, and indeed the Spanish troops at large, were not called upon until Joseph's dispositions showed what the nature of the final attack was likely to be.

Against this is to be set Jourdan's account, that, at the opening of the discussion whether the final attack should be delivered or not, not only could a mass of cavalry be easily seen in the plain, but the Spanish infantry also was visible on the point of climbing the Sierra de Segurilla. But I am bound to say that I have my doubts as to Jourdan's accuracy, and that I suspect his *Mémoires* to contain not a little wisdom after the event. In the first place I do not believe that he could have seen the British cavalry, because it was concealed behind the Cerro de Medellin—Wellesley was not a man to show troops without a reason, if he could hide them—and in the second place I think it certain that Bassecourt's division of Spanish infantry, which ultimately occupied the Sierra de Segurilla, was at the moment nowhere near it.

Similarly with regard to the guns borrowed from Cuesta, Napier makes them come up before or during Ruffin's second attack. But Leith-Hay shows that they did not come up before the general and final attack.

1809. have been carried ; but the repeated attacks upon the  
July 28. hill had opened the eyes of the British General, and such a turning movement was now impossible. And, as he spoke, Jourdan pointed to the mass of cavalry and the Spanish infantry which (always according to his own account) were visible in the northern plain. Continuing his argument, he represented that in case of a French reverse Cuesta might advance upon the left of Joseph's army, throw it off the line of its retreat to Madrid and force it to fall back by mountain paths upon Avila, where no wheeled vehicles could accompany it. He therefore urged strongly the expediency of standing on the defensive until Soult's advance should have made itself felt upon the rear of the Allies.

Victor, irritated by his two repulses, took precisely the opposite view. He ascribed the failure of his previous attacks to the fact that the Fourth Corps had stood aloof ; and he undertook, if the King would engage the right and centre of the Allies, to storm the Cerro de Medellin with his three divisions. If, he said in his blustering fashion, such an attack did not succeed, it was time to give up making war altogether—a phrase which his colleagues did not allow him to forget. Joseph hesitated between the two opinions, though with strong inclination towards that of Jourdan ; and not the less so because intelligence had just reached him that the vanguard of Venegas was before Toledo, and that consequently fifteen thousand men must shortly be sent away from his own army to defend Madrid against the Spaniard. At this critical moment, however, there came in letters from Soult announcing that he could not reach Plasencia before the 3rd of August at earliest, and possibly not till the 5th. This news effectually killed the idea of standing on the defensive and waiting for the arrival of Soult, for it would be impossible to detach the required force to Madrid in the face of the superior army of the Allies ; and meanwhile the capital would probably fall. Joseph therefore decided to fight

a general action, hoping to defeat the Allies to-day and the army of La Mancha to-morrow. 1809.  
July 28.

It was then agreed that Victor should make a third attempt upon the Cerro de Medellin, and that Joseph, overawing the Spaniards with a division of cavalry, should assail the British centre and right. Ruffin's division, though much shaken by its losses, was once again selected to turn the Cerro de Medellin by the northern plain, its right-hand regiment, the 9th Light, advancing on the Sierra de Segurilla, and its left being covered on the plain itself by one brigade of Villatte's division, which was to advance in line with it. Villatte's remaining brigade, six battalions, was left on the Cerro de Cascajal, ready to assault the key of Wellesley's position at the right moment; and on its left the division of Lapisse was to assail the left of Sherbrooke's. Next to Lapisse, Sebastiani's division, eight thousand strong, and Leval's German division were to prolong the line to a short distance beyond the Pajar de Vergara. From that point southward the Spaniards were to be contained by Milhaud's five regiments of dragoons; but Leval's division was to be formed in echelon, with its left thrown back, in case of a Spanish advance. In rear of Leval two Polish battalions were to stand in second line; and Joseph's Guards, together with Dessolles's brigade, were to be kept in reserve. Of the cavalry the six regiments of Latour-Maubourg's division were to be drawn up in rear of Sebastiani and Lapisse; Beaumont's two regiments were to support Villatte, and Merlin's four regiments were to follow Ruffin's advance along the northern plain. In all, some thirty thousand infantry were to take part in the attack; and the British infantry was by this time reduced to little more than seventeen thousand men.

Soon after eleven o'clock<sup>1</sup> a great cloud of dust towards the Alberche indicated that Sebastiani's corps was in motion; while the appearance of French light

<sup>1</sup> The time given is that mentioned by Charles Stewart, the Adjutant-general; but all the narratives give a different hour.

1809. troops on the Sierra de Segurilla a little later showed July 28. that Wellesley must expect a further attempt upon his left. He therefore applied to Cuesta for reinforcements; and it cannot be said that the old Spaniard was niggardly, for he sent one division of cavalry, another of infantry, and a battery of twelve-pounders. Of these Albuquerque's division of horse, in six regiments, and a battery of horse-artillery was formed up in rear of the brigades of Fane and Anson; Bassecourt's division of seven battalions crossed the northern plain to occupy the Sierra de Segurilla; four guns were placed in the redoubt of Pajar de Vergara, and two were stationed on the northern spur of the Cerro de Medellin. There was ample time for these movements, for the Fourth Corps had not yet been deployed, and Joseph's dispositions were not such as could be hastily completed. At length all was ready, and between one and two o'clock the French guns again opened fire from end to end of the line, overwhelming, as before, the artillery of the Allies by numbers and weight of metal, and working serious havoc among the passive lines of the British infantry.

About half an hour later the battle began opposite the British right, where Leval's German division, being entangled among vineyards and enclosures, blundered prematurely against the advanced light companies of Campbell's brigade.<sup>1</sup> These companies were in a measure surprised, and lost a few prisoners before they could retire, the Germans following them up eagerly. Leval's nine battalions had been formed, as usual, into line of battalion-columns,<sup>2</sup> but their array had been so much broken by the obstacles through which they had passed, that they surged upon Campbell's line and upon the left of the Spaniards as a disordered mass of over four thousand men. Campbell, with his right resting on the redoubt, was ready for them, having called up

<sup>1</sup> Desprez, on the contrary, says that the First Corps came into action before the Fourth.

<sup>2</sup> No doubt each battalion was in column of double companies.

the Fortieth regiment from the second line into the first; and, as the Germans emerged into the comparatively open ground immediately in his front, he opened fire at a range of about two hundred yards, while the ten guns in the redoubt poured upon the attackers a tempest of grape and cannister. From that moment Leval's men gained little ground; and presently the regiment which faced the redoubt, scourged beyond endurance by the blast of the artillery, gave way and ran back. The regiments on their right wavered at the sight, and Campbell ordered his brigade to advance. The Seventh Fusiliers led the way, and their opponents speedily vanished into the vineyards, abandoning a battery of six guns. The three battalions of Leval's left, which had engaged as many battalions of the Spaniards, thereupon retired; and the whole division fell back upon the Poles in its second line. With excellent judgment Campbell checked the pursuit among the vineyards, and brought his troops back to their first position after spiking the captured guns. He had read Leval's division a lesson; but the day's work was not yet ended either for him or for his adversary.

The contest between these two was not yet over when the divisions of Lapisse and Sebastiani, each of twelve battalions and together nearly fifteen thousand strong, came down to the attack of Sherbrooke. Both of the French generals had drawn up their troops in two lines; Lapisse placing his second brigade in rear of the first, while Sebastiani drew up his two brigades side by side;<sup>1</sup> but in each case the first line consisted of six battalions, each battalion in column of double companies, and each group of three battalions closed up to within six paces of interval, so as to present a massive front of one hundred and fifty to one

<sup>1</sup> The first line of Lapisse therefore consisted of the 16th Light and 45th of the Line; his second of the 8th and 54th of the Line. Sebastiani's first line consisted of the 28th and 58th; his second of the 32nd and 75th. Each regiment had three battalions.

1809. hundred and eighty men, nine ranks deep. The  
July 28. second line was of even denser formation than the first, each group of three battalions being drawn up either in line of company-columns, with a front of about one hundred men and a depth of eighteen ranks, or in close column of double companies with a front of fifty to sixty men and a depth of twenty-seven ranks. Covered by a swarm of skirmishers, the French crossed the Portiña and pressed on against Sherbrooke's line, which awaited them with ported arms, the men having orders to hold their fire until the enemy was within fifty yards, and then to pour in their volley and charge. The First Division had suffered heavily from the shot of the French artillery, but it endured this and the musketry of the advancing enemy without flinching, until the moment at last came for them to act. They then discharged a crashing volley which shattered the front line of Lapisse and Sebastiani, and, overlapping its flanks, shivered their whole array to pieces. The French gave way in confusion, and Sherbrooke's entire force followed them over the Portiña with the bayonet, pursuing in long straggling, disorderly lines. Cameron prudently halted his brigade a short distance beyond the brook ; but the Germans on his left and the Guards on his right pressed on hotly, to find themselves presently confronted, as two isolated and unformed bodies, with the compact columns which composed the second lines of Lapisse and Sebastiani. The French guns on the Cerro de Cascajal were instantly turned upon the Germans, and raked them through and through ; while the untouched French infantry closed eagerly upon the confused masses of red-coats, and bore them back, in spite of a desperate resistance, with heavy loss. In their retreat the Guards and Germans carried Cameron's brigade away with them, and the whole were driven over the brook in disorder, joyfully chased by the victorious French.

The British centre seemed to be broken beyond repair ; but Mackenzie brought his brigade forward

to meet the rush of the oncoming enemy,<sup>1</sup> while Cotton's 1809. brigade of light cavalry came up to fill the gaps upon July 28. his right flank, and the Forty-eighth, despatched by Wellesley himself directly that he had perceived the rash advance of the Guards, descended from the Cerro de Medellin to cover the retirement of the Germans. There followed the most critical moment of the day as the Forty-eighth, Twenty-fourth, Thirty-first, and Forty-fifth stepped in to close the breach made by the dispersal of Sherbrooke's division. The Forty-eighth was obliged to wheel aside to allow the stream of fugitives to pass, but presently re-formed line, and checked the advance of Lapisse's pursuing columns by a vigorous counter-attack upon their flank. Mackenzie's brigade likewise stood with admirable steadfastness while the Guards and Cameron's men ran through them, and then engaged Sebastiani's troops in a savage duel of musketry. Before long they found that they were not alone. The Guards rallied instantly, and re-formed themselves with a cheer which showed that their spirit was not broken. Cameron's brigade also rallied; and even the Germans, who had not only suffered as heavily as the Guards at the moment, but had been severely punished on the previous day, recovered themselves with commendable promptitude and came forward once more. Meanwhile Sebastiani and Lapisse had been successfully held at bay; and, as the rallied troops advanced again to the front line, the French began to waver under their fire. The death of Lapisse, who was struck down while urging his men to a supreme effort, finally destroyed the spirit of his division, which slowly but surely gave way. The withdrawal of these troops uncovered the right flank of Sebastiani, whose men, already growing unsteady, were hastened towards their final repulse by a charge of Cotton's dragoons upon their left flank. Thus the contest in the centre came

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman was the first to do justice to Mackenzie's brigade and to point out the excellence of its service in this action.



1809. to an end, both sides having suffered appalling losses  
July 28. in one of the stubbornest fights that occurred during  
the whole course of the war.

Meanwhile Leval's Germans had again been thrown into action to cover the left flank of Sebastiani. They came on with little spirit, having not yet recovered from their first repulse, and were driven back with slight difficulty by two Spanish battalions and by the two brigades of Campbell's division. But even so their misfortunes were not ended ; for the King's regiment of Spanish horse charged two of the retreating battalions with great courage, cut down a large number of men, and, following up its success, captured a battery of four guns. Seven more cannon, which had been brought forward by Leval, fell into the hands of the British, who had pressed their advantage further than in the first attack, making a total of seventeen guns altogether taken from Leval's division. After such defeat and disgrace the Poles and Germans finally retired, having no stomach for further fighting.

During the earlier part of the assault upon the centre of the Allies, the enemy had made no movement against their left, though the fire of the guns on the Cerro de Cascajal had wrought havoc among the British on the opposite hill.<sup>1</sup> But at the moment when the struggle in the centre had reached its height, Victor began his advance along the northern plain to turn the Cerro de Medellin. His battalions proceeded slowly and cautiously ; Ruffin's division on the right, with the 9th Light extended over the Sierra de Segurilla ; the 24th and 96th of the Line on their left, and next to

<sup>1</sup> Especially Donkin's brigade, which lost over 150 men without firing a shot. Mr. Oman quotes Grattan's *Connaught Rangers*, iii. 91, where it is stated that that regiment lost 136 officers and men in the battle without firing a shot. Grattan was not present at the action, and half of these casualties belong to the previous day, when the regiment was surprised at Casa de Salinas and ran away. Grattan steals whole passages from Napier without acknowledgment, and his statements generally should not be accepted without careful examination.

them the three battalions of the 27th Light, under 1809. Villatte in person, with two more regiments of his July 28. division in support. They were harassed, as they marched over the plain, by the enfilading fire of Wellesley's guns on the Cerro de Medellin, an ordeal especially trying to Ruffin's division, which had had enough of fighting; and their commanders were evidently not exhilarated by the sight of the Spanish troops which had been brought forward to meet them, for their movements were hesitating and uncertain. As they approached the base of the Cerro de Medellin, a roar of cheering from the centre told Wellesley that all was safe in that quarter; whereupon, stepping rapidly to the reverse side of the Cerro, the General sent orders to Anson's brigade to charge the French infantry in the plain, and to Fane's heavy cavalry to support the attack.

Anson's brigade being upon the spot, whereas Fane's was in rear of the centre, at once trotted out into the plain, and wheeled to its right into two lines, the Twenty-third on the right and the First Hussars of the Legion on the left, each regiment, apparently, in column of wings. The French infantry, which had by this time assumed the formation of an echelon, with the right thrown back, thereupon threw itself into squares; and Anson then directed the Twenty-third against the 27th Light, which lay immediately to its front, while the Hussars inclined to their left towards the 24th and 96th, which lay to northward and somewhat in rear of the 27th. Far ahead of the men and conspicuous on a white charger rode Colonel Elley, Adjutant-general of the cavalry, to select the line of advance; and the brigade was moving at a trot, perfectly well in hand, when the French gunners on the Cerro de Cascajal trained their pieces upon the Twenty-third and opened fire. Instinctively men and horses swerved away from the shot to their left and, without any word of command, increased their pace. The Hussars, conforming to the movement, bore also to their left, and coming under a

1809. galling fire from the French riflemen on the Sierra de  
July 28. Segurilla, likewise hurried their pace, so that thus the entire brigade, while still far from its objective, broke into a canter. As the squadrons passed the base of the Cerro de Medellin, Hill's division cheered them, and the troopers answered their cheer, which doubtless augmented the men's excitement and with it the speed of the advance.

To the careless eye there seemed to be nothing but an unbroken sheet of grass between them and the French infantry; but to the practised observer of rough ground there were and are indications which rouse the instinct of caution — patches of rushes showing the presence of water, which can only run away down the channel of the Portiña, and must therefore have cut a way to it. And in fact there was a water-course running from the Sierra de Segurilla straight athwart the line of Anson's advance, invisible at a distance owing to the long waving grass, but none the less present, with a width of ten or twelve feet, and a depth of six or eight feet in the middle of the plain, shoaling to three or four feet, though with a greater breadth, towards the southern margin. Elley came upon it unexpectedly, and, unable to check his horse, cleared it with an effort; which done, he pulled up to wave back the Twenty-third. He was too late. Upon such ground the troopers should in any circumstances have held their horses well in hand, and, if they had done so, they would have found many places where they could have crossed the obstacle with perfect ease; but they were already in full career, and in a moment blundered full upon the chasm. Some of them jumped over, some turned away, some scrambled across by sheer good luck, but the mass of the first line fell headlong down, men and horses, in utter confusion. The second line, warned by what they saw on their front, tried to rein up, but surged likewise into the struggling crowd by the water-course, upon which the French infantry of the 27th now opened a biting fire. Farther to the north the German Hussars

came to the like disaster, though, being out of range of 1809. the French artillery and musketry, they suffered less and July 28. were sooner able to regain some semblance of order.

Quite undismayed by the mishap, Major Ponsonby of the Twenty-third and Major Arentschild of the Hussars hastily rallied their men,<sup>1</sup> and galloped on with them to the attack. The Germans charged at the square of the 24th, some of them riding boldly up to the bayonets, but were repulsed by the French fire, and retired with a loss of no more than thirty-seven men and sixty-four horses. Of the Twenty-third a part threw themselves against a square of the 27th Light, and were beaten off with severe punishment; while another part, numbering fewer than two hundred men, under Colonel Elley, bore away to the left and rode past the French infantry against the leading brigade of Merlin's cavalry division, which was following in support of Villatte and Ruffin. So impetuous was their onset that the first line of French horse swerved away and would not meet them, but swarmed in upon their rear as they closed with the second line. Thus assailed by odds of five to one, Elley's detachment was speedily overwhelmed. Elley himself and a few more forced their way through the enemy and escaped to the northward; the remainder were killed or captured, few of them being unhurt. This mad exploit cost the Twenty-third two hundred and seven of all ranks killed, wounded, and missing, and two hundred and twenty-four horses, out of a total of about four hundred and eighty of all ranks.

Upon the failure of the attack of Anson's brigade, Wellesley countermanded the advance of Fane's squadrons; and the battle on the northern plain, as on all other points of the line, came to an end, saving

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly possible that the advance could have continued without some attempt to rally; but Leith-Hay's account almost forbids us to believe that there was a moment's halt, and Ponsonby in his journal says that the Twenty-third lost 190 men and 200 horses in the space of ten minutes. I owe the perusal of this too scanty journal to the kindness of the Hon. Lady Ponsonby, to whom I wish to record my grateful thanks.

1809. for the continual play of the French cannon. It seems  
July 28. certain that Anson launched his men, or possibly that they launched themselves, into action prematurely ; for it can never have been Wellesley's intention that they should dash themselves against unbroken infantry in square. On the other hand, the menace of manœuvring cavalry was sufficient to keep the French battalions from deploying, if it did not actually compel them to remain in square, in either of which cases they made an admirable mark for the heavy guns of the German Legion and of the Spaniards. Indeed, even as things fell out, Villatte's two regiments suffered appreciable loss while standing in square. It is true that Milhaud's dragoons were following in support of Villatte, but they numbered fewer than twelve hundred sabres, whereas Fane and Anson together had nearly two thousand, to say nothing of the three thousand cavalry of Alburquerque's division. Properly handled, therefore, Wellesley's counter-attack might have been most effective, though hardly decisive ; and it is not surprising that, after the experience of Ponsonby's insane onslaught and after contemplation of the mass of cavalry and Spanish infantry in their front, the divisions of Ruffin and Villatte should presently have abandoned their advance and fallen back to their former positions. An accident also intervened to check the engagement towards the north of the battle-field. The long grass in the northern plain had been kindled by the French shells ; and, under the impulse of a north-easterly breeze, the fire spread rapidly along the line by which the Twenty-third had advanced and thence up the northern face of the Cerro de Medellin, scorching the helpless bodies of the wounded, and burning many to death. Only by the bravery and resource of a German sergeant of artillery was a great explosion of ammunition averted near the battery on the hill ; and the whole of that part of the position was veiled in a dense cloud of smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Before this time Joseph had been apprised of the

<sup>1</sup> Leith-Hay, p. 114 ; Beamish, i. 217-218.

failure of the grand attack upon the centre of the Allies, <sup>1809.</sup> and had ordered his reserve of one French brigade and <sup>July 28.</sup> his Spanish Guards, about five thousand men in all, to move off to the Cerro de Cascajal. But soon General Milhaud, who was observing the Spanish right, reported that a strong column was moving out from Talavera towards the Alberche. The information was untrue, for the strong column consisted really of no more than a few patrols; but the prospect of an offensive movement against the French left flank was so formidable that Jourdan declared immediate retreat to be imperative; and orders to that effect were promptly despatched to the various commanders. Victor protested to the messenger that, from his own observation, he could declare Milhaud's report to be false, that there were signs of recession rather than advance on the part of the Allies, that a fresh effort made by the reserve would be decisive, and that, consequently, he would not quit his position without further directions. His guns, as it seems, were not yet silent, and even his skirmishers were keeping up a desultory and distant fire against the Cerro de Medellin; indeed one of their spent bullets struck Wellesley himself, who was seated on the hill, on the breast, and inflicted a severe contusion, though without piercing his clothes. Joseph's aide-de-camp galloped back to his master, arresting as he went upon his own responsibility the retirement of Leval's division, and delivered Victor's answer. Joseph approved of his action and asked Jourdan for his opinion. The Marshal replied that, since the Allies remained stationary, there was no occasion for a retreat, but that it was imprudent to risk the reserve in an attack which, at best, was doubtful of success. Other officers represented that even success could not be made complete at so late an hour, for it was now six o'clock. This prudent counsel prevailed, and Joseph ordered the troops to withdraw to their positions of the previous day, seemingly determined to renew the attack on the morrow, or at any rate not to recross the Alberche.

1809. The Fourth Corps, therefore, turned about and  
 July 28. retired for a short distance to its bivouacking ground,  
 while the First remained, as on the night of the 27th,  
 upon the Cerro de Cascajal. Everywhere the two  
 armies were so close to each other that their sentries  
 were within hearing distance. In the course of the  
 night false information was brought to Victor that  
 troops were on the march opposite to his position on the  
 British left; and it should seem that the Marshal's  
 spirits must have undergone rapid evaporation after the  
 close of the action, for he at once concluded that  
 Wellesley was about to turn his right flank. There-  
 upon, without waiting for Joseph's authority, he ordered  
 his troops to retreat, merely sending an aide-de-camp  
 to inform the King of what he had done. Sebastiani,  
 observing the movement, thought it his duty to conform  
 to it, and ordered the Fourth Corps also to fall back;  
 and lastly, Joseph, upon the arrival of Victor's messenger,  
 obediently set the reserve in motion and followed the  
 others. By daybreak the entire army had passed the  
 Alberche, and a few hours later it halted near its old  
 ground about Cazalegas.

So ended the battle of Talavera, one of the severest  
 ever fought by the British army. Wellesley's losses  
 on the 27th and the 28th amounted in all to eight  
 hundred killed, nearly four thousand wounded, and  
 over six hundred missing, nearly half of these last  
 belonging to the German Legion.<sup>1</sup> On the 28th alone,  
 the losses exceeded forty-five hundred,<sup>2</sup> and several

<sup>1</sup> Killed . . . .	34 officers,	767 men =	801
Wounded . . . .	196 "	3719 "	= 3915
Missing . . . .	8 "	639 "	= 647
<hr/>			
Total			<u>5363</u>

<sup>2</sup> Killed . . . .	27 officers,	643 men =	670
Wounded . . . .	171 "	3235 "	= 3406
Missing . . . .	6 "	439 "	= 446
<hr/>			
Total			<u>4522</u>

battalions were terribly punished. The Twenty-fourth 1809. lost over three hundred and twenty killed and wounded July 28. out of a total of fewer than eight hundred ; and the Thirty-first, which had been reduced from seven hundred and thirty to six hundred on the 27th, was further diminished to four hundred and seventy on the 28th ; a most honourable record for two young battalions which, together with the stout old Forty-fifth—itsself the loser of nearly one hundred and seventy killed and wounded—saved the fortunes of the day. Of the rash regiments of Sherbrooke's division, the two battalions of Guards lost over six hundred men out of something under two thousand, and not a prisoner among them ; while the Eighty-third and the First and Second battalions of the German Legion lost more than half of their numbers hurt or slain, and the Sixty-first little fewer. Among the killed were Generals Mackenzie and Langwerth, and the Colonel of the Eighty-third ; and among the wounded Generals Hill, A. Campbell, and H. Campbell, Colonel Whittingham, who was acting as brigadier in the Spanish army, four officers commanding battalions, and two of Wellesley's personal staff. Sherbrooke had two horses killed under him ; Charles Stewart's hand was grazed by the splinters of a shell ; every officer of the Guards was shot through the hat or clothes ; in fact, to use the phrase of Charles Stewart, there was scarcely an officer in the army who could not show the marks of the enemy's fire about him.<sup>1</sup> The casualty list is further curious inasmuch as it shows that the Royal Staff Corps, who may be termed the Engineers of the Horse Guards as opposed to those of the Ordnance, lost nine officers wounded, and that the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, in its attack upon Leval's German battalions, counted six officers wounded out of a total of no more than fifteen casualties. Cuesta stated his losses vaguely at twelve hundred men, most of whom must have been deserters, for the Spaniards were never severely engaged, and

<sup>1</sup> *Londonderry MSS.*, Ch. Stewart to Castlereagh, 31st July 1809.



1809. only a few of them were engaged at all. It must, July 28. however, be noticed that those few, whether infantry, cavalry, or artillery, behaved exceedingly well.

The French suffered more severely, their casualties in the two days being acknowledged to have exceeded seven thousand ;<sup>1</sup> but this, after all, was less than a sixth of their whole force, whereas the loss of the British was over one fourth. Ruffin's unfortunate division was that which was most heavily punished ; and among his regiments, the 96th of the Line lost over six hundred men, which cannot have been far from one half of its strength. The 24th of the same division, and the 54th of the division of Lapisse, also lost each of them over five hundred, and the divisions of Sebastiani and Leval were little less roughly handled than those of their two colleagues. Among the dead were Generals Lapisse and van Porbeck ; and among the hurt were every colonel and seven out of twelve of the battalion-commanders of Sebastiani's division. It is mentioned that nearly all of the French wounded were the victims of musketry only, who quickly recovered, whereas a large proportion of the British were disabled by cannon-shot and shell, and so grievously hurt that they died.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, the French ought to have won the battle ; and if they had been properly handled they must have won it, for their infantry counted nearly double that of the British, their superiority both in number and weight of guns was even greater, and their cavalry was amply sufficient to hold the Spaniards motionless and in

<sup>1</sup> Killed . . . .	45 officers,	716 men =	761
Wounded . . . .	220 „	6081 „ =	6301
Missing . . . .	1 „	205 „ =	206

Total 7268

Mr. Oman, to whom we are all indebted for this return, points out that the missing does not include the French wounded who were left on the field on the night of the 28th, and were recaptured in the British hospital by Victor on the 6th of August.

<sup>2</sup> Desprez in *Mémoires du Roi Joseph*, vi. 492 ; Munster, p. 52.

awe. It is impossible to suppose that Wellesley would ever have run the risk of such an action, and indeed of such a campaign, had he realised for a moment how poor was the quality of the Spanish troops. Even this preponderance of men and artillery did not represent the whole of the advantage enjoyed by the French. By their successful surprise of Donkin's brigade on the evening of the 27th they had not only inflicted on the Allies a slight reverse, but had detained their one able commander so long with the rear-guard that he was unable to range his order of battle before dark. Indeed, it is very plain that the British troops were not in order of battle at all on the evening of the 27th, and that Wellesley was totally deceived as to their stations; for he imagined that the Guards were on the extreme left of the line, whereas they were in the centre; and he, in common with the generals on the Cerro de Medellin, conceived that the key of the position was held by two lines of infantry, whereas it was not properly occupied even by one. Moreover, it cannot be denied that, strong though the Cerro de Medellin might be in itself, it was perfectly accessible on its northern slope, thus leaving the British left flank in the air. If, as Jourdan too late suggested, a large body of troops had been massed quietly during the night in the northern plain, and the British had at dawn been assaulted simultaneously along their front and on their left flank, while a demonstration was made to keep the Spaniards occupied, matters must have gone extremely hard with Wellesley. Joseph had troops amply sufficient for such a manœuvre; he would have caught the left of Wellesley's line of battle in disorder, as has been seen; and, the Cerro de Medellin once won, he could have rolled up the British array from end to end. The Spaniards would certainly have taken to flight at the first sign of a French victory; and the French cavalry would as certainly have galloped after them and cut Wellesley's line of retreat upon Oropesa and the bridge of

1809. *Arzobispo*. In such an event it is hard to imagine how the British could have escaped absolute destruction.

Such an issue, which would have been of untold value to Napoleon and a frightful blow to the hopes of Europe, was averted by the weakness of Joseph's authority and the insubordination of his generals; and this weakness and insubordination were due chiefly to Napoleon's contemptuous treatment of his brother, and to his habit of issuing orders over Joseph's head directly to the Marshals. Thus it was that the self-willed and conceited Victor wasted hundreds of his brave men in two isolated, ill-planned, and abortive attacks upon the Cerro de Medellin, the first of which only called Wellesley's attention to the defect in his dispositions, and the second to the exposed situation of his left flank. Joseph must share the blame for the partial nature of the second attack, since he held back the bulk of the army to await the result of Victor's attempt. Lastly, when the general onset was finally delivered, Victor, by employing beaten instead of fresh battalions, made only the feeblest of demonstrations against the British left, and reduced the assaults of Lapisse and Sebastiani in the centre practically once again to an isolated effort. In fact the French troops were shamefully abused by their commanders, and if Victor had met with his deserts, he would have been sent straight back to France under arrest.

Nevertheless these considerations must not be allowed to weigh too heavily against the British or against their General. Wellesley, once baulked of his intended spring upon Victor on the 23rd, found himself in a most dangerous situation and was obliged to make the best of it. But this was the least of his difficulties. Cuesta appears to have been in a state of absolute physical prostration after his retreat from Torrijos, and there seems to be little doubt that his coach was seen galloping off amid the mass of the fugitives, presumably with himself inside it, at the time of the panic

on the Spanish left.<sup>1</sup> This can only have been the act of his coachman, for the old General was brave enough ; but, be that as it may, it is, I think, certain that on the evening of the 27th the Spanish army was for a time without a commander, otherwise Wellesley would never have been with it instead of with his own troops. It needed no small nerve to face a French army of nearly fifty thousand men at such a crisis ; but Wellesley trusted the British soldier and himself. His coolness and presence of mind were unfailing, and he felt the pulse of the struggle with that unerring sensitiveness which stamped him as the first general of his time on a field of battle. His men too—and with his men are included the regimental officers, without whom the men are nothing—seconded him with admirable steadfastness and courage. Carping politicians at home, Lord Grey and Samuel Whitbread, declared that Talavera was no victory, and that the French had left seventeen guns behind them on the field as a matter of convenience. They might reasonably have maintained that the action was very costly, and that Wellesley could show nothing in return for the blood that had been spilled ; but Talavera was a victory, and a great victory, for if it gained nothing, at least it saved the British army. And it was won not by the mere superiority of the line over the column as a tactical formation, but by superiority of courage, steadiness, and discipline ; for, nobly as the French fought in their first great action against the red-coats in Spain, the British soldiers proved themselves the better men.

<sup>1</sup> Munster and Napier both tell this story.

## CHAPTER XXXI

1809. AFTER his retirement beyond the Alberche, Joseph realised that his position was extremely critical. His great stroke had failed. The honours of the fight had rested with the British. He had hoped to crush them first, and then to fall upon Venegas; but now there was actual danger lest he himself might be caught between the fire of the two armies. Moreover, there was no saying what might be the effect of later events
- July 26. in Madrid. Already on the 26th a false report of the approach of the British had brought the Spanish population in joyous throngs to the southern gate of the city to welcome their saviours. On the two following days the agitation diminished; but on the evening of the 29th the Governor, General Belliard, after receiving the news of the battle, ordered the families of all Frenchmen
- July 29. to withdraw with their property into the Retiro.<sup>1</sup> Joseph was somewhat relieved on the evening of the 29th by the fact that, with the exception of a few Spanish patrols, nothing had been seen of the Allied army during the day; and he now resolved to leave Victor in position on the Alberche and to march with the Fourth Corps against Venegas, whose advanced parties were reported to have reached Valdemoro, not more than
- July 30. nine miles south of Madrid. On the 30th, therefore, the King shifted his headquarters eastward to Vargas, and there held a council of war. Nothing had been heard of Soult; and it was generally agreed that for the present it would be imprudent for the Fourth Corps to

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Miot de Melito*, iii. 60-61.

move too far away from the First ; wherefore Joseph 1890.  
took up a position at Illescas, about twenty miles south  
and west of Madrid, where, on the 1st, he heard that Aug. 1.  
the main army of Venegas was at Aranjuez. Meanwhile  
Victor, upon finding himself alone, grew nervous.  
Robert Wilson's corps had reached Escalona ; and the  
Marshal, receiving exaggerated reports of its numbers,  
became apprehensive lest his own right might be turned,  
and retired first to Maqueda and then to Santa Cruz de Aug. 1-3.  
Retamar. Joseph thereupon fell back northward to  
Mostoles, in order at once to draw nearer to Victor  
and to overawe the agitated population of Madrid ;  
and at Mostoles, Victor, upon a false report that the  
British were advancing, was on the point of joining him,  
when he learned by reconnoissance that Escalona had  
been evacuated and that Cuesta and Wellesley were  
in retreat. On the same day Joseph ascertained, to Aug. 5.  
his immense relief, that Soult had at last arrived in  
the valley of the Tagus, and that he could now devote  
his entire attention to Venegas.

That general, of whom we last heard on the 24th,  
had, as we have seen, allowed Sebastiani to slip away  
from his front and join Victor, failing thereby most  
flagrantly in his duty both to the Supreme Junta and  
to Cuesta. He might have mended his fault somewhat  
by a rapid advance upon Madrid, to which the way lay  
absolutely open ; but, far from this, he moved forward so  
slowly and timidly that his first division, under General  
Lacy, did not arrive before Toledo till the 28th, nor July 28.  
himself with his main army before Aranjuez until the  
29th. Lacy made sufficient demonstration before  
Toledo to induce Joseph to reinforce the garrison ; but  
Venegas remained halted in irresolution at Aranjuez  
from the 29th of July to the 5th of August without an  
attempt to make his presence felt, except by pushing  
weak patrols towards Madrid. On the 5th, Joseph Aug. 5.  
ordered the Fourth Corps to march upon Aranjuez ;  
and Sebastiani, coming before the town on the 7th,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arteche, Mr. Oman, and Napier say that Joseph came before

1809. found the bridges broken down ; whereupon, after a  
 Aug. 7. lively skirmish, he marched by Joseph's order for  
 Toledo, the King with the reserve moving meanwhile  
 Aug. 8. to Vargas. On the night of the 8th Sebastiani entered  
 Toledo, and, after giving his troops some hours of rest,  
 Aug. 9. crossed the river on the 9th. Here he met and drove  
 back General Zerain's Spanish division, which was  
 observing the bridge for Venegas, and, guessing the  
 direction of Joseph's march, had followed it by parallel  
 roads on the south side of the Tagus. Venegas had  
 received strict orders from Cuesta to retire ; but none  
 Aug. 10. the less, on the 10th of August, he assembled his whole  
 army at Almonacid, about twelve miles east and south  
 of Toledo, where, full of blind confidence, he decided to  
 give his men one day's rest and to attack the French,  
 who were little inferior to himself in strength, on the  
 12th. Sebastiani, however, was before him, and  
 without waiting for the reserve under King Joseph,  
 Aug. 11. fell upon him on the morning of the 11th ; with the  
 result that he totally defeated the Spanish General with  
 a loss of over five thousand men and of twenty-one  
 guns. The Spaniards, though miserably handled by  
 their commander, fought well, for the victory cost  
 Sebastiani over two thousand killed and wounded,  
 and Venegas was able to retreat in fair order upon  
 Madridejos. But the steadfastness of the troops only  
 made the more regrettable the General's omission to  
 cling closely to Sebastiani's army, as he had been bidden,  
 in the critical third week of July ; and his final rash pre-  
 cipitation into a pitched battle stamps him irredeemably  
 as a general who was irresolute for any good purpose,  
 though unswerving in the pursuit of folly. He was  
 removed from his command a few weeks later by the  
 Supreme Junta, and replaced by General Areizaga.  
 The change signified no more than the substitution of

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the town on the 5th. Desprez, Jourdan, and Ducasse all give the day as the 7th ; and Miot de Melito confirms this date by mentioning that he joined Joseph's headquarters at Valdemoro on the 5th.

one incompetent man for another ; and meanwhile the great opportunity of the army of La Mancha had been lost. 1809.

Wellesley for his part had found himself quite unable to move upon the 29th. His army had had little to eat during the two days of severe fighting ; and the number of his wounded was so great that fully two thirds of his exhausted men were employed in bringing them in. At about six o'clock in the morning Craufurd's brigade and the Chestnut Troop of Horse Artillery overtook the army. Craufurd's regiments had been sent by water up the Tagus to Vallada, and after waiting at Santarem till the 7th of July to receive its transport, had followed the line of Wellesley's advance by long stages, but with not infrequent halts ; the men being much tried by the difficulty of procuring food, and by the weight of their kits in a season of extreme heat. On the evening of the 27th at Naval Moral, rumours reached the brigadier that a general action was imminent, and the march was resumed before dawn of the 28th. Ere long was heard the sound of a distant cannonade, and, upon reaching Oropesa at noon, Craufurd weeded out a few sickly men, and pushed forward with the remainder in all possible haste. The next halt was at ten on the same night, when the three regiments, which had not seen water during the day, reached a stagnant pool used only by cattle, and drank the filthy water greedily. From thence they marched without further lingering straight on to the battle-field, having covered between forty-five and fifty miles in about twenty-five hours. They at once took up the line of outposts towards the Alberche and supplied fatigue-parties to collect the wounded of both sides, for the Spaniards had already begun to massacre the helpless French who were lying on the field. Still this reinforcement of three thousand men was of course insufficient to make good the losses which Wellesley had suffered in the late action. July. 29. July. 27.



1809. Throughout the 29th, therefore, the whole army  
July 29. remained stationary; but on that same day Wellesley wrote that he should endeavour to persuade Cuesta to follow up Joseph, who must certainly have detached a corps to encounter Venegas, and that he had every intention of advancing upon Madrid, unless interrupted by some accident on his flank.<sup>1</sup> But Cuesta's army was in no condition to act alone on ground so blind and difficult; and on the 30th Wellesley received  
Aug. 30. definite intelligence that Soult was threatening the pass of Baños, the very point for which he had been most apprehensive since the beginning of the campaign. Though now aware, however, that Ney had joined Soult, he did not estimate their combined forces at more than twenty thousand men; and he suggested that Cuesta should parry the stroke by sending a division of infantry, with its guns, to strengthen the small force that already lay in the menaced quarter. This Cuesta declined to do; but none the less on the  
Aug. 1. 1st of August Wellesley was still confident that Soult would not cross the mountains with a victorious army in his front and Beresford in his rear. In the course of the night, however, news came that Soult at the head of fourteen thousand men had brushed away the feeble force of the Marquis del Reino, which held the pass of Baños, and was advancing straight upon the British line of communications. Thereupon Cuesta, who had hitherto refused to send a man in that direction, ordered General Bassecourt's division to march with all speed to del Reino's assistance. In the morning of the  
Aug. 2. 2nd further information reached Cuesta that Soult had arrived at Plasencia on the 1st; and Wellesley then met the Spanish General in conference. Relations between the two commanders had not improved in the course of the campaign, and Wellesley was full of complaints of the impracticable temper of his colleague; but upon the principal measure to be adopted at the moment they were agreed, namely, that a part of the

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Beresford, 29th July 1809.

army must move westward to meet Soult, while the remainder stood fast to check any offensive movement on the part of Victor, and to favour the operations of Venegas. Cuesta proposed that for this purpose the army should be separated into two halves, each composed in due proportion of British and Spaniards. Wellesley refused to divide his force, but offered either to march against Soult with his whole army, or to remain at Talavera with it, while Cuesta should lead his entire host to Plasencia. Cuesta accepted the former of these proposals, and accordingly on the 3rd Aug. 3. Wellesley marched westward to Oropesa.<sup>1</sup>

On reaching that place at noon Sir Arthur could perceive no sign and hear no intelligence of the enemy, but he became apprehensive lest, upon the slightest movement on the part of Victor, Cuesta might abandon Talavera; and he begged O'Donoju to procure carts and to send westward as many of the British wounded as could safely be moved. He was, however, still intent upon attacking Soult, and even wrote instructions to Beresford to cut off the Marshal's retreat,<sup>2</sup> if he should retire by the passes of Perales or Baños. Shortly afterwards a messenger came in from Cuesta, bearing letters that had been intercepted from Jourdan and Joseph to Soult. These instructed the Duke of Dalmatia to press forward with all diligence upon the flank and rear of the Allies; assuring him that he would be supported by Ney's corps, which would follow in his rear, while that of Victor was prepared at the same time to resume the offensive against the Allied front. This letter revealed the startling facts that Soult's force was, or would shortly be, of twice the strength at which it had hitherto been estimated, and that Venegas had failed utterly to execute his task of

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Beresford, 29th July; to Frere, 30th July; to O'Donoju, 31st July; to Castlereagh, 1st August 1809; Londonderry, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> There was a general impression in the army that Soult would be caught and crushed between Wellesley and Beresford. Boothby, *A Prisoner of France*, p. 25.

1809. making a diversion towards Madrid. Cuesta thereupon  
Aug. 3. announced his intention of evacuating Talavera and moving westward forthwith. Wellesley wrote a hasty letter of protest to O'Donoju, striving to avert this precipitate movement. "Depend upon it," he wrote, "you are mistaken in Soult's strength, and that Victor, without Sebastiani and the King, who cannot move while Venegas is where he is, can do us no harm." The effort was useless, and the reason soon became apparent. Shortly afterwards there arrived full information that the French advanced guard had reached Naval Moral, thus assuring themselves of the possession of Almaraz; and that del Reino, after retiring across the river at that point, had destroyed the bridge. Yet an hour or two passed, and a second letter came in from O'Donoju to say that the whole of the French troops which had been in the north of Spain—that is to say, the corps of Soult, Mortier, and Ney—were coming down by the pass of Baños, to the number of fifty thousand men. Yet again a few hours, and the entire Spanish army came surging into Oropesa like a flock of sheep amid unspeakable noise and confusion. Wellesley conceived that Cuesta was falling back in panic; and it is tolerably certain that O'Donoju, at any rate, was thoroughly and not unjustifiably frightened. But, as a matter of fact, Cuesta had left Zayas's division of foot and Albuquerque's of horse at Talavera to keep Victor amused until he should return victorious after the defeat of Soult.<sup>1</sup>

It is now time to give the exact position of Soult's force during these critical days, so that the true situation on the 3rd of August may be realised. It has already been told that Mortier's corps had arrived at Salamanca  
July 23. on the 23rd of July; that the greater part of Soult's own corps was already there, awaiting only a new train

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Beresford, 3rd Aug.; to O'Donoju and Frere (several letters), 3rd and 4th Aug. 1809; *Arteche*, vi. 341-342. The sequence of events is difficult to follow in precise order, since the hour when Wellesley's despatches were written is not stated by him; but it can be disentangled by comparison of the letters.

of artillery ; and that, upon the arrival of Foy with 1809.  
Joseph's orders on the 24th, Soult had directed the  
rest of the Second Corps and the whole of Ney's to  
move forthwith to that same place. On the 27th July. 27.  
Mortier's corps, followed by three brigades of Lorges's  
and Lahoussaye's dragoons, was set in motion towards  
Bejar, counting in all about seventeen thousand men,  
and, after dispersing a small Spanish force at Bejar itself  
and del Reino's battalions at the pass of Baños, entered  
Plasencia on the 1st of August. On the 30th of July  
Soult, having at last received his artillery, led the  
Second Corps, eighteen thousand strong, forward from  
Salamanca ; traversed the pass of Baños on the 1st of Aug. 1-2.  
August ; and on the 2nd joined Mortier with a part  
of his troops, the rest being at Oliva, nine or ten miles  
in rear. Ney left Salamanca on the 31st of July, and  
was thus only one day's march behind Soult. On the  
3rd the whole of the cavalry of Soult and Mortier was Aug. 3.  
pushed forward to Naval Moral, and Mortier's infantry  
to Toril, while Ney's corps was but one day's march  
from Plasencia. Moreover, on that same day an  
intercepted letter, written by Wellesley to General  
Erskine from Talavera on the 1st, fell into the hands of  
Soult, and made him aware that the British commander  
reckoned the French force which was advancing upon  
Baños at no more than twelve thousand men. Thus  
almost at the same moment both Wellesley and Soult  
accidentally realised the truth that about twenty  
thousand British were within an ace of walking into  
the jaws of fifty thousand French.

It was plain that neither party could afford to lose  
time, and Soult ordered his cavalry to push on, if  
possible ; to the bridge of Arzobispo to gain news of  
the enemy. Wellesley, less fortunate, was obliged to  
consult his colleague ; and, as Cuesta had not arrived,  
he at once suggested to the Chief of the Spanish staff  
that the only thing to be done was to assemble the  
whole army before the bridge of Arzobispo with a view  
to an immediate crossing to the southern bank of the

1809. Tagus.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of the 4th Cuesta appeared,  
Aug. 4. and, as usual, fell violently at variance with Wellesley over the operations to come. The foolish old man, doubtless anxious to excuse his hasty departure from Talavera, was eager to fight. In vain Wellesley pointed out that his army was physically weakened by starvation, the troops having received no complete ration for at least a week; that though Mortier's corps might be alone in advance, Soult's was close behind it;<sup>2</sup> that, even if Almaraz were gained with or without an action, a second battle must be fought against very superior forces before the bridge could be re-established. No argument could move Cuesta's obstinacy; wherefore at last Wellesley told him roundly that, let the Spanish army do what it would, the British would cross the river, and so left him. It was now six o'clock in the morning; the British baggage had already marched at four, but the army still remained for a few hours in position to cover the arrival of the wounded from Talavera.

The sight of these wounded seems to have roused the British resentment against Cuesta to its bitterest. In the first place, he was blamed for deserting fifteen hundred of them, whose hurts were too grave to permit of their removal from the hospital at Talavera. It is not, however, clear, why he, any more than Wellesley, should have risked the safety of his army to save the British wounded; for he could not possibly have remained at Talavera more than two or three days, at the end of which time the men in hospital must equally have been left to their fate. In the second place, he is said, "though encumbered with carts and waggons," to have refused to make over more than seven for the service of the British wounded. Be that as it may, it is certain that Wellesley was compelled to sacrifice a quantity of baggage in order to

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to O'Donnoju, 3rd Aug. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> He misnamed the corps, thinking that Soult was in advance and Ney close behind; but this does not affect his reasoning.

procure carriage for two thousand men ; and that seven hundred more were compelled to hobble miserably along on their own feet, weak, bleeding, and suffering, until they fell from exhaustion and either died or, more fortunate, fell into the hands of their generous and compassionate enemies. Soult had already captured over four hundred of Wellesley's sick at Plasencia ; but whether there, at Talavera, or on the road, the British invalids received none but the best and kindest of treatment from the French.

At noon the British troops marched off to the bridge, and by two o'clock were safely assembled on the south side of the Tagus, Mortier's patrols coming into sight just as the passage was completed. The red-coats had the good fortune, too, to meet with some herds of swine, upon which they fell "like men possessed" in the passion of their hunger ; and it perhaps was well that they could not see the Spanish troops in Oropesa, for whom the inhabitants had opened their stores in consequence of the approach of the enemy, and who were now well supplied with food.<sup>1</sup> At midnight the army resumed its retreat, the main body moving by a circuitous and very rough track to Peraleda de Garbin, where it bivouacked for the night. At the same time the Light Brigade, together with Donkin's, was pushed forward under Craufurd through the mountains upon Almaraz, which, after a very severe march with no food except a little boiled wheat and parched peas, these troops reached on the morning of the 6th. Here Craufurd found del Reino's two weak battalions, and took over from them the defence of the bridge and ford, occupying at the same time the village of Casas del Puerto, which commands the pass of Mirabete, and thereby securing the road against any advance of the French. The main body, meanwhile, with great labour, advanced to Mesas de Ibor,

<sup>1</sup> Leslie, p. 159. Yet Cuesta complained that about this time his headquarters were for four or five days without rations of any kind (Arteche, vi. 337).

1809. the men, already weakened by starvation, being fatigued  
Aug. 6. still further by the duty of repairing the road and helping the exhausted horses of the artillery to drag the guns. On the 7th, two divisions and the artillery reached Deleitosa, and Wellesley, though his position was still far from enviable, could at least congratulate himself that his army was safe from the enemy ; for, if Craufurd were attacked, he could speedily reinforce him. The remaining division of the army was left at Mesas de Ibor to maintain communication with the Spaniards.

Cuesta, for his part, remained on the 4th on the right bank of the Tagus with his army divided between Arzobispo and Oropesa ; and here he was rejoined by Bassecourt, who had been recalled from Centinello, and by his rear-guard under Zayas and Alburquerque from Talavera. This foolhardiness was of a piece with the general perversity of his conduct throughout the campaign, and might have cost him dear, if Victor, in his alarm over Wilson's movements, had not moved so far to the east. In the afternoon, advanced parties of Mortier's cavalry pushed down to the bridge, but, finding a division of infantry and twelve hundred horse before them, drew back, and were chased away by the Spanish troopers. Extraordinary though it may seem, it does not appear that the French were yet aware that the British had crossed the river ; for Mortier, upon hearing from his scouts that a strong hostile force was at Oropesa, and that Talavera was still occupied by the Spaniards, became alarmed and summoned Soult to his assistance. Soult accordingly hurried his corps forward  
Aug. 5. on the 5th to Casa Tejada, a short distance to west of Naval Moral, while Ney on the same day advanced south-eastward from Plasencia to Malpartida. Throughout the day Cuesta kept his army in order of battle before the bridge ; but towards evening, as the enemy's parties became more numerous on his front, he brought the bulk of his force over the river, leaving only a rear-guard on the northern bank, and took up a

strong position, which he entrenched, to contest the pass- 1809.  
age. On the morning of the 6th, Mortier attacked the Aug. 6.  
rear-guard and obliged it to retire with haste over the  
bridge; and on the same day the arrival of the Sixth Corps  
at Naval Moral, and of the Second at El Gordo, brought  
the whole of Soult's fifty thousand men within striking  
distance of Arzobispo; while Victor, having on the 5th  
ascertained the retreat of the Allies, re-entered Talavera.<sup>1</sup>

Thus a force of nearly seventy thousand French was  
now concentrated in the valley of the Tagus; and  
Victor needed only to cross the stream by the bridge  
of Talavera in order to fall, within little more than  
forty-eight hours, upon Cuesta's flank. This seemed  
to be the most obvious way of clearing the passage  
of the river, for Soult, upon reconnoitring Cuesta's  
defences, realised that they could not be forced without  
great loss, and sent out parties in all directions to find  
a ford. As a matter of fact, there was a ford, that  
of Azutan, about a quarter of a mile above the village  
of Arzobispo, which was known to the Spaniards and  
which they had been particularly charged to protect.  
Its existence was revealed to the French by the care-  
lessness of the Spanish troopers, who, while watering  
their horses, allowed them to wander far out into the  
stream, and so to betray the shallows on its southern  
side. Careful search enabled the French engineers to  
trace the line of the ford; and Soult resolved to attack  
on the following day. Cuesta, meanwhile, finding him- Aug. 7.  
self straitened for supplies in his station before the  
bridge, extended his army in the direction of Mesas  
de Ibor, leaving Bassecourt's division of infantry and  
Albuquerque's of cavalry, some eight thousand men  
with sixteen guns, to hold the position which he had  
fortified. It was with no small satisfaction that Soult,  
on the morning of the 8th, observed that the force  
opposed to him was considerably diminished.

Feeling evidently certain of success against the Aug. 8.

<sup>1</sup> The details of the French advance are taken from Le Noble  
and from Soult's letter to Clarke of 13th Aug. 1809.



1809. Spaniards, he sent Ney, at daybreak, a sketch of a ford  
Aug. 8. below the bridge of Almaraz, with orders to march  
thither with his corps and fall on Wellesley's rear.  
Soult had already built epaulments in order to shelter  
his gunners from the fire of the Spanish sharp-shooters  
on the bridge, but he intended to make his principal  
attack by the ford; and, since the day was extremely  
hot, he ordered the assault to be delivered at noon  
when the Spaniards, as he knew, would be enjoying  
their *siesta*. There seemed, indeed, to be no reason  
why they should not enjoy it, for Alburquerque had  
declared the ford to be impracticable.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly,  
at the appointed hour, Caulaincourt's brigade of French  
horse, six hundred strong, trotted down to the stream,  
crossed it before the Spaniards realised what they were  
about, and cut a battalion and a regiment of cavalry to  
pieces. The rest of Soult's cavalry, numbering over  
three thousand, quickly followed Caulaincourt; and the  
Marshal then launched a battalion at the bridge, the  
defenders of which, seeing their retreat endangered,  
broke and fled almost immediately. Alburquerque  
brought up his division of cavalry hastily and in  
bad order to charge the French, but was out-manceuvred  
and driven off. The remainder of the Spanish infantry  
made all haste to the mountains in their rear, where  
they escaped with little loss; but the rest of the fugitives  
were hunted by the French dragoons for miles, until  
checked by two divisions from Cuesta's main army.  
The loss of the Spaniards was eight hundred killed and  
wounded, six hundred men, four hundred horses, and  
sixteen cannon captured. The French also recovered  
fourteen of their guns, which had been taken at Talavera,  
made over to Cuesta by Wellesley, and left on the  
roadside by the Spanish General owing to the difficulties  
of the march.<sup>2</sup> The loss of the French little exceeded  
one hundred killed and wounded.

<sup>1</sup> Arteche, vi. 347.

<sup>2</sup> This enabled Soult to report that he had captured 30 guns,  
and Joseph to say that he had lost no guns at Talavera.

Just before opening the attack, Soult had received a message from Victor to say that his army was crossing the bridge at Talavera, and would on the 8th reach Aldea Nueva de Barbarroya, about nine miles east of the bridge of Arzobispo. Soult therefore wrote orders to Victor to take up the pursuit of the Spaniards, intending apparently that the Fifth Corps should support him, while Ney simultaneously should break in upon Deleitosa from Almaraz. His own purpose, announced to Joseph before the action, was to move at once to the frontiers of Portugal.<sup>1</sup> It seems possible that if he had followed up his success at once—and he had four divisions of infantry which had not been engaged—he might have broken up the Spanish army; for Cuesta's headquarters on the 8th were still at Peraleda de Garbin, and, though the Spanish General moved to Mesas de Ibor that night, his guns were all of them still on the low ground by the river at four o'clock on the morning of the 9th, with his advanced guard on the east bank of the stream and the main body on the west. Wellesley, who was on the spot, judged that if the French drove in the advanced guard, they would capture the whole of this artillery, and that thereupon the Spanish army would disband itself. If, therefore, Soult had pushed his infantry only, without cannon, after the flying bands of Bassecourt and Alburquerque, as Napoleon in his place would probably have done, he would certainly have fulfilled Sir Arthur's fears. But, on the other hand, seeing that the British troops were not far distant from the Spanish, that the position of Mesas de Ibor was one

<sup>1</sup> Soult to Joseph, 6th Aug. 1809. In the same despatch he announces that Victor will take up the pursuit. Napier says that Soult proposed to support Victor's movement with the Second and Fifth Corps, which Soult plainly had no idea of doing. He says again, in his review of the campaign, "If Soult had been permitted to follow up the attack on Arzobispo on the 8th of August, what could the 17,000 starving British troops, encumbered with the terror-stricken Spaniards, have effected against the 70,000 French that could have stormed their positions on three sides at once?" As Mr. Oman has pointed out, Napier cannot be trusted when Soult is in question.

1809. of extraordinary strength, and that Soult could know nothing of Cuesta's dispositions, it is not surprising that the Marshal should have hesitated to advance without his artillery.

Again, it must be remembered that the heat of the weather was excessive, that the country was absolutely bare of provisions, and that Soult's troops were as much exhausted as those of his enemies by starvation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, their last experience of a march in the mountains had not been pleasant either for themselves or for their commander, so that, weakened as they were by privation, they would hardly have entered upon it with alacrity. Now, taking his artillery with him, Soult could not have reached the position of Mesas de Ibor, even if unopposed, before the morning of the 10th; and, though Cuesta's guns were then still at the foot of the hill, it is reasonable to suppose that the Spanish General would have made some effort to impede the French advance in the defiles farther to the west, in

Aug. 10. order to gain time. By the evening of the 10th Wellesley had caused the guns to be dragged up to the

Aug. 11. top of the hill; and on the 11th the Allies were re-established in their position, the British on the left extending from Jaraicejo to Almaraz, the Spaniards on the right extending from Deleitosa to Mesas de Ibor. Soult, all things considered, could hardly have been ready to attack before the 11th, and Victor could not possibly have reached the spot upon an earlier day. The ruling fact in the whole situation was that the armies of both sides were paralysed by lack of victuals.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that Soult's whole scheme collapsed. Ney marched, as he had been bidden, to Almaraz, but failed to find the ford, and brought

<sup>1</sup> "La chaleur était accablante; la troupe depuis cinq jours était sans pain." Mortier to Soult, 9th Aug. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Craufurd, 9th Aug.; to Cuesta and Lord Wellesley, 10th Aug. 1809. "Cette contrée déjà épuisée lorsque le duc de Bellune l'avait occupée, n'offrait plus aucune ressource depuis le séjour que venait d'y faire les Anglo-Espagnols" (*Mém. de Jourdan*, p. 268).

back his entire corps to Naval Moral. The ford, which 1809. was well known to the British, was at its best hardly practicable for infantry, and Ney's corps could not have hoped to force the passage in the presence of the red-coats. Victor, having already orders from Joseph to join the Fourth Corps,<sup>1</sup> was in no humour to pursue Cuesta, and in fact did not do so. But Soult evidently expected little from his commands to Ney and Victor, for, before he knew the result of them, he proposed to march with the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps<sup>2</sup> to a position between Plasencia and Coria. There it would be open to him to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo, or to march by Salamanca to the Douro, in order to suppress any hostile rising in that quarter, or even to hasten to Lisbon before the British army could reach it. Joseph, however, had already made up his mind that he would have none of such matters. Venegas had not yet been beaten at Almonacid, and neither the King nor Jourdan had any idea of exposing Madrid to danger. Moreover, the heat of a summer campaign was telling upon the troops; and, curiously enough, orders were on their way from Napoleon to Joseph forbidding all operations in Portugal during the month of August, but directing preparations to be made for them in February.<sup>3</sup> The King therefore issued directions for breaking up the army. Ney was to return to Salamanca to drive back del Parque, who had advanced thither from Ciudad Rodrigo, and to hold down Leon, where Romana was making trouble; Soult was to remain at Plasencia to guard the lines of ingress from Portugal, and Mortier to watch the Tagus from Talavera to Almaraz.

Ney, who asked for nothing better than to escape from Soult's command, set his corps in motion at once; reached Plasencia on the 11th; and at the pass of Baños had the good fortune to meet with Wilson's corps, which

<sup>1</sup> Jourdan to Belliard, 8th Aug. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Ducasse prints, "le 3<sup>e</sup> Corps d'Armée," evidently by mistake for "les trois corps d'armée."

<sup>3</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 29th July 1809.

1809. for a week past had been hunted by three different columns from the armies of Soult and Victor, and from the garrison of Avila. Wilson had contrived to evade all three, when he ran unexpectedly against Ney, and after imprudently engaging him for the whole day, escaped with the loss of four hundred men to the pass of Perales, by which on the 24th he brought his column safely to Castello Branco. Ney then pursued his way to Salamanca; and Wilson shortly afterwards went home, having quarrelled bitterly with Beresford, to return to the Peninsula no more. His isolation from the rest of the Allies was due entirely to neglect of Wellesley's orders, who prefaced a final letter to him on the 5th of August with the biting words, "It is difficult for me to instruct you, when every letter I receive from you informs me that you are farther from me, and are carrying into execution some plan of your own."<sup>1</sup> And this was the essence of Wilson, as of so many men who, like him, are excellent partisan-leaders and nothing more. He could not break himself of prosecuting his petty operations for their own sake, instead of making them subserve the general purpose of the Commander-in-Chief. We shall, however, meet with him again.

Meanwhile, Wellesley, unable as yet to divine the enemy's intentions, remained at Jaraicejo, widening daily the breach between himself and Cuesta. The British General was not best pleased at being kept absolutely in the dark as to the movements of his colleague, and he was particularly incensed at hearing nothing of the rout of Alburquerque at Arzobispo, until Alburquerque brought the news in person on the afternoon of the 9th. But the main battle between the two commanders raged over the question of supplies. Each party accused the other of intercepting provisions which were intended for his particular army; each denied the accusation; and each, there seems good

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Wilson, 5th Aug. 1809. *Suppl. Desp.* vi. 325. But none the less Wellesley gave Wilson great praise in his despatches. Wellesley to Castlereagh, 21st Aug. 1809.

reason to believe, was inaccurate in his denial.<sup>1</sup> The 1809. situation, however, was sufficiently serious. The men, being half-starved, were losing discipline and spirit, and the news of the defeat of the Austrians at Wagram and of the armistice of Znaim had struck discouragement into the officers. "With the army which a fortnight ago beat double their numbers," wrote Wellesley on the 8th of August, "I should now hesitate to meet a French corps of half their strength." The mortality among the horses from want of forage was another most formidable difficulty; and Wellesley, who had already been obliged to make over some of his ammunition to the Spaniards from want of transport to carry it, was fain to contemplate the necessity of destroying some of his guns.

On the 11th the British Commander fairly warned Aug. 11. Cuesta that, unless his wants were supplied, he should withdraw from the country. On the 13th, Cuesta, Aug. 13. having been stricken with paralysis on the previous day, resigned his command, and was succeeded by General Eguia. This was hardly a change for the better. Before this General had been in his new position three days Wellesley was obliged to renew to him the threat which he had made to Cuesta on the 11th; to which Eguia replied by issuing orders which had a specious appearance of good-will, but still left both troops and horses starving. Another protest from Wellesley evoked from the Spanish Commander an unfortunate insinuation that want of provisions was not the true motive that prompted his British colleague's anxiety to march to Portugal; whereupon Sir Arthur rejoined that, since his word was doubted, he should write to Eguia no more. This correspondence passed on the 19th; and on the next day Wellesley an- Aug. 20. nounced that he should march for Portugal on the morrow. The Spanish Commissary, seeking to conciliate

<sup>1</sup> "So pressing were our wants that one of our commissaries took from the Spaniards by force one hundred bullocks and one hundred mule-loads of bread" (Munster, p. 57)

1809. at once the British General and the populace of Seville, declared privately to the one that he felt ashamed of the privations to which the army had been subjected, and publicly to the other that the army had received double rations ever since it entered Spain. Such subterfuge only confirmed Wellesley in his determination to withdraw. His patience was not unreasonably exhausted. "We are starving," he wrote to Beresford on the 19th, "our men falling sick, and we have nothing to give them in the way of comforts; and our horses are dying by hundreds in the week. We have not had a full ration of provisions ever since the 22nd of last month; and I am convinced that in that time the men have not received ten days' bread, and the horses not three regular deliveries of barley. We have no means of transport, and I shall be obliged to leave my ammunition on the ground on quitting this place. We now want eighteen hundred horses to complete the cavalry, and two or three hundred for the artillery."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, throughout this harassing time Wellesley's calm insight and perfect coolness never failed him. He received his first intelligence of the return of the French to Plasencia on the 11th, and at once drew up a plan of operations whereby Beresford's troops together with the brigades of General Lightburne and Catlin Craufurd, which had lately arrived in Lisbon, might delay a French invasion of Portugal for a sufficient time to enable the main British army to return without a halt to Abrantes. Beresford, who had remained about Ciudad Rodrigo until he heard of Soult's march from Salamanca southward, had, pursuant to his orders, followed that march in a parallel line to westward, crossing the Sierra de Gata at the pass of Perales. He reached Moraleja on the 12th of August; his cavalry lay ahead of him at Coria, and his right was

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Cuesta, 11th, 13th Aug.; to Lord Wellesley, 9th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 21st Aug.; to Beresford, 14th, 19th Aug.; to Eguia, 14th, 15th, 19th Aug.; to Don Luis de Calvo, 20th Aug. 1809.

in communication with the two British brigades above 1809. mentioned, which had advanced as far as Zarza la Mayor. But on the 15th, by Wellesley's command, he Aug. 15. shifted his entire force to the place last named, so as to be ready to fall back on Castello Branco; and from that point westward every position in which he could delay a hostile march was indicated to him. As his force amounted to eighteen thousand Portuguese and over four thousand British, Beresford should have been able to fulfil his duty with success.

Wellesley, however, from the first was sceptical as to the present possibility of a French invasion of Portugal. The movement upon Plasencia had been too openly made under the eyes of the British; the troops seen on the road were too few—Ney's and Soult's corps only—as he quite correctly guessed; and the forces of the contending parties in Estremadura were so equally balanced that the French could not think of solid offensive operations in that quarter. From all of these facts Wellesley deduced the perfectly accurate conclusion that Plasencia was simply the right of the French line of cantonments on the Tagus. Gradually the situation cleared itself up. On the 16th Wellesley heard of the defeat of Venegas at Almonacid. By the 19th he was aware, through an intercepted letter from Aug. 19. Jourdan to Soult, that the enemy had abandoned all further offensive operations, and he had also obtained accurate intelligence as to the stations of the various French corps. The knowledge of these dispositions made him reluctant to quit so commanding a post as that which he occupied. With his army concentrated over against the right centre of the long line of the French cantonments, with a passage at Almaraz whereby to burst suddenly into the middle of them, and with Beresford's forces to his hand to threaten their right flank, Wellesley saw visions of a brilliant stroke upon Soult or Mortier. He acknowledged, however, that at best it could be but a raid, for, unless there were an effective force at Baños to bar the return of Ney from



1809. Salamanca, or one to eastward to alarm Joseph for the safety of Madrid, he must inevitably be forced to retire before overwhelming numbers. But it was useless to think even of raids when his men were sinking from hunger, and his horses dying at the rate of over one hundred a week.<sup>1</sup>

Aug. 21. Accordingly on the 21st he fell back southward to Truxillo, and thence by Miajadas and Merida to the valley of the Guadiana. It was evidently at the outset his intention to retire to Elvas—indeed the two brigades of light cavalry received their routes for the march thither,<sup>2</sup> and the cantonments for the whole of the army were actually drawn up—but at Merida Sir Arthur halted for some days upon the urgent request of his brother Lord Wellesley, now ambassador at Seville, that he should remain within the Spanish frontier.<sup>3</sup> By some blunder of the staff, however, some of the troops, who had marched by way of Cáceres, received no orders to halt, and moved westward as far as Portalegre before they were stopped and turned south-eastward to Campo Mayor.<sup>4</sup> On the

Sept. 3. 3rd of September, therefore, Wellesley shifted his headquarters to Badajoz, and cantoned the troops from Campo Mayor and Olivenza in the west to Merida and Alemandrejo on the east. He was resolved to hold no further communication with the Spaniards; but he saw no reason for hurrying to Portugal, and had no intention of doing so. The Supreme Junta, in wild alarm at his actual fulfilment of the threat which he had so often repeated, and evidently dreading a French irruption upon their own habitation of Seville, ordered Eguía to retreat to Villa Nueva da Serena, a little to east of Medellín, and entreated Wellesley to look to

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Villiers, 12th Aug.; to Beresford, 12th, 14th, 19th Aug.; to Lord Wellesley, 15th, 16th, 21st Aug. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> *Londonderry MSS.* Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 18th, 21st Aug. 1809.

<sup>3</sup> Wellesley to Lord Wellesley, 30th Aug. 1809.

<sup>4</sup> Craufurd's division and five squadrons of cavalry. Wellesley to Craufurd, 4th Sept.; to Lord Wellesley, 7th Sept. 1809.

the defence of the Guadiana. But the British General 1809. pointed out that the Spanish troops could not do better than remain for the present where they were, only breaking up the bridge of boats at Almaraz and sending it down to Badajoz; for, in their position between Mesas de Ibor and Truxillo, they effectually covered the passages of the Guadiana, and there was no chance of their being attacked by superior numbers. As to himself, he could serve the Junta quite as effectually on the Portuguese frontier as elsewhere, for no French force would dare to cross the Guadiana leaving the British army on its flank and rear. His reasoning did not convince the authorities at Seville, but that was no affair of his, so long as he was quit of co-operation with the Spanish armies.

So ended the campaign of Talavera, a campaign of accidents if ever there were one, and more remarkable for the internal quarrels of the generals upon each side than for the actual contest in arms between the opposing armies. The confusion among the French was extraordinary. Joseph, with Jourdan for the chief of his staff, was nominally Commander-in-Chief; but Napoleon was equally trying to control the operations from the Danube by sending orders direct to the subordinate generals. Among those subordinates Soult and Ney were at daggers drawn; and all, especially Victor, were resolute in ignoring Joseph's authority. Among the Allies, the British Government had indeed given Wellesley a reasonably free hand; but the foolish intrigues of Frere, who considered himself the representative of the Cabinet in Spain, did much to embarrass relations between the British and Spanish Generals; while the Supreme Junta undoubtedly promoted discord among the Spanish leaders by giving orders to Venegas behind the back of Cuesta. As to Cuesta himself, he was so hopelessly foolish and impracticable that, looking to his feeble state from the first and his final collapse under a stroke of paralysis, it is not only charitable but reasonable to regard him as having been of unsound

1809. mind ever since his injuries at the battle of Medellin. His intellect was not great, nor his temper amiable before that misfortune, but after it both may be said to have been altogether warped for a time. The primary result of all these quarrels was to initiate a vigorous campaign of recrimination between the parties concerned. The speakers of the Opposition in the British Parliament, backed by William Cobbett, may be said to have opened the controversy publicly by their bitter attacks upon Wellesley, attacks of which they lived to be heartily ashamed. Cuesta no sooner recovered his health than he seized his pen and made a furious onslaught upon Venegas, to which Venegas did not fail to reply. The remaining disputants conducted their contests more quietly, but with none the less acrimony, as their letters show ; and their partisans do not fall behind the principals in virulence. Wellington's despatches depict with bitter irony his trials with Cuesta; and General Arteche has stated, not without severity, Cuesta's case against Wellington. The memoirs of Ducasse and Jourdan have perpetuated the grievances of Joseph against Napoleon, Soult, and Victor ; and Le Noble has retorted the complaints of Soult against Jourdan and Ney. Finally there are the terse and terrible letters of the great Emperor himself, impartially chastising the whole of his agents in Spain, but naturally giving no hint of his own shortcomings.

In this cloud of controversy the various issues have been still further obscured by the intrusion of wisdom after the event, and by persistent ignoring of the fact that armies, being composed of men, must eat to live. There can be no doubt that by advancing eastward into the valley of the Tagus, with forty thousand men ready to oppose him in front and fifty thousand ready to descend upon his flank, Wellesley, who had little more than twenty thousand troops upon whom he could depend, committed a grave mistake. The fact is so patent that any child could see it. But, in the first place, he expected nearly half of the force on his front to be

distracted by Venegas, as indeed it ought to have been ; 1809. in the second, he would, but for Cuesta's obstinacy, have had an opportunity on the 23rd of July of dealing a heavy stroke at Victor before Sebastiani and Joseph could join him ; and in the third, the rapid concentration of the force upon his flank was very greatly due, as we have seen, to accident. For by a curious coincidence the quarrels of Soult and Ney had brought about precisely the movement that Napoleon desired, at the exact moment when his letter of instructions arrived. No human prescience could have foreseen so singular a development of affairs as this, which, in fact, was extraordinarily lucky for the French. Yet it must be repeated once more that, in spite of all favourable appearances, Wellesley was always nervous about his left flank, and did his best, though in vain, to make Cuesta secure it.

But here there comes in the greatest of all his errors and miscalculations, namely, his reliance upon the Spanish armies. It is, of course, a question how far the charging this error upon him may not also be wisdom after the event. He had received ominous warnings from Roche ; but that officer bore not the best of characters, and Wellesley, as he frankly confessed, disbelieved him. He had, again, the circumstances of Moore's campaign before him ; but Moore was always something of a pessimist, and Wellesley could hardly have been ignorant of the fact. Again, he knew that Spain is not one but many countries, and he might reasonably hope that Estremadura might prove herself a better Spain than Leon had done, particularly after the installation of the Supreme Junta. Indeed it may be doubted whether any power of divination could have realised the true nature of the Spanish Government and of its forces in the field without actual and painful experience. Yet again, Moore was trying to contend against the entire French army with Napoleon himself at the head ; but in the summer of 1809 Napoleon was in Germany, and many of his best troops with him.

1809. The opportunity was a very great one, and, looking to the disappointment excited in Spain by Moore's retreat, it was a political as well as a military necessity to take advantage of the occasion. But in spite of all the difficulties of his position, it is not easy to acquit Wellesley of temerity for entering upon this campaign in complete dependence upon the Spaniards for his transport and supplies. Moore's experience upon this point at least might have been taken to heart; but it was not. The truth seems to be that Wellesley was somewhat impetuous and over-confident, not yet fully alive to the magnitude of the problem that had been set him for solution, and perhaps just a little anxious to prove himself in Castlereagh's eyes to be a very different man from Moore.<sup>1</sup>

As regards his operations when once he had committed himself to the campaign, there is little more to be said except to glance at the possible consequences if he had attacked Victor, as he had intended, on the 23rd of July, and defeated him. On that day Sebastiani was still at Madridejos, and Joseph with the Reserve was at Naval Carnero, some forty miles from the scene of action; so that Victor could have retreated either upon Madrid to join the King, or upon Toledo to join Sebastiani. But whichever alternative he might have chosen, either the Reserve or the Fourth Corps would have been left in isolation, and the Allies could

<sup>1</sup> There is a curious passage in a letter written by Captain (afterwards Sir William) Gomm from Holland after receiving the news of Talavera. "I believe Sir Arthur possesses more military talent than any officer in our army, and much judgment; but he is impetuous, and I am afraid his ardent spirit has blinded him for the moment to the consequences to which even brilliant victory must expose an army situated as his is. After all that has passed before his eyes he cannot surely place any reliance upon these degenerate Spaniards; and if the failure of Sir John Moore was insufficient to prove to him how little was to be risked in their favour, the circumstances of his own march through the country and their behaviour in the late battle, one would think, should be fully equal to such a purpose." *Life of Sir W. Gomm*, p. 137. Gomm, it will be remembered, had served through Moore's campaign.

hardly have failed to enter Madrid. They could not, 1809. of course, have held it; but the moral effect would have been great, and they could have made such havoc of the French stores and supplies in the capital as must greatly have crippled the enemy. Of course, once more, in this case Soult might equally have cut off Wellesley's communications with Portugal; but then, as Napier points out, the British General could have shifted his line of operations to La Mancha, where his own army would have been united with those of Cuesta and Venegas; and in such circumstances the Supreme Junta could hardly have refused the British Government the fullest use of Cadiz as a new base. Moreover, it should always be remembered that Wellesley had a right to expect earlier information than he received of the advance of Soult's corps upon Plasencia, and that, even though these corps descended suddenly and unexpectedly upon him, he was able to escape them by crossing the Tagus and changing his line of operations to Badajoz. In reading the French accounts any one would suppose that Wellesley had been saved by a miracle from Heaven, instead of by his own promptness and common sense; whereas, on the contrary, the miracle was on behalf of the French themselves, inasmuch as at the beginning of July it was only the merest chance that stationed Ney's corps at Astorga instead of in the heart of Galicia.

As to the proceedings of the French, it is hard to judge Joseph severely, because only in name was he Commander-in-Chief. His great error, of course, was in fighting at Talavera when he did; though it is fair to say that, but for Victor's insubordination, he might have given a very good account of his enemies. He and Jourdan, however, blamed Soult for the general failure of the campaign, alleging that the Duke of Dalmatia might have reached Plasencia long before he did, if he had not waited for Ney; while Soult's partisans threw the entire responsibility for the delay upon Ney himself. All such criticism is beside the point.

1809. Napoleon had given strict orders to Soult not to move by small detachments, and he thoroughly approved that Marshal's refusal to march until the three corps were well closed up. But apart from this, it must be noted that Soult declined, beyond doubt quite rightly, to advance until he had received artillery for his corps from Madrid. The cannon did not reach him until the 29th of August, and he marched on the 30th. Who, then, was really responsible for Soult's tardiness in moving down upon Plasencia? Wellesley, and no one else; for it was he who, by his campaign upon the Douro, had brought about the destruction of Soult's artillery.

Lastly, it must be observed that Napoleon later on utterly condemned the entire plan of campaign prescribed to Soult by Joseph, saying that the Marshal's three corps should have been called from Salamanca to Madrid, and that the decisive battle should have been fought under the walls of the capital. The movement upon Plasencia he declared to be both dangerous and useless: dangerous because the French army at Talavera might have been beaten before Soult could have come to its support; useless because Wellesley could evade the whole manœuvre by the comparatively simple measure to which he actually and successfully resorted.<sup>1</sup> Regarding Soult's refusal to follow the Allies after the rout of the Spaniards at Arzobispo, and his delegation of the pursuit to Victor, Jourdan and Joseph did not fail to use hard words. But the plain fact is that the French armies were at the last gasp from fatigue and privation; and indeed the campaign of Talavera came to an end simply and solely from want of food. Both sides had started it badly by basing their movements upon the false principle of double external lines. Both had pursued it still worse by marching a large force into an exhausted district without any organised system of supplies. As a natural consequence

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 15th, 21st Aug. 1809. *Corres. de Napoléon*, 15,661, 15,694.

the great stroke designed by each of them came to 1809. naught, and they were obliged to disperse in opposite directions to avoid death through starvation.

One more point, of which the Spaniards have made very much, remains still to be considered, namely, the effect which might have been produced if the forty thousand troops which were sent to Walcheren had been despatched to the Peninsula. This can fortunately be answered in Wellesley's own words: "I do not think," he wrote to Castlereagh on the 25th of August, "that matters would have been much better if you had sent your large expedition to Spain instead of to the Scheldt. You could not have equipped it in Galicia or anywhere in the north of Spain." Nor, it may be added, could it have been equipped anywhere in the Peninsula unless Cadiz had been granted to it as a base, a measure against which the Spaniards were resolutely determined. "If," continued Wellesley, "we had had sixty thousand men instead of twenty thousand, we should not have got to Talavera to fight the battle for want of means and provisions. But if we had got to Talavera, we could not have gone farther, and the armies would probably have separated for want of means of subsistence, probably without a battle, but certainly afterwards." Add to this difficulty the still more formidable one arising from the dearth of specie in England, and it becomes manifest that, without Cadiz, the army of Walcheren would have been powerless in Spain. The great military question in the Peninsula—a question always ignored by Spanish writers—was that of feeding the troops; and final victory was practically assured to that army which should first vanquish the difficulties of transport and supply. Wellesley, as we shall see, perceived this truth after Talavera, and by recognising it forthwith assured himself of ultimate success.

For the rest the general results of the campaign were entirely negative. The British failed to do any serious mischief to the French, and the French failed to drive the British into the sea. Upon the operations



1809. of the whole summer, the Allies had gained ground, for they had driven the French from Galicia, Asturias, and Northern Portugal ; but, on the other hand, the French had, on the whole, held their own in other quarters despite the absence of Napoleon and his best troops on the Danube ; and the next campaign was likely to be very different from that of 1809. Wellesley warned Ministers to send back the transports to Lisbon as soon as they should receive positive intelligence that Napoleon was reinforcing his army in Spain. " You may depend upon it," he wrote, " that he and his marshals must be desirous of revenging upon us the different blows we have given them, and that, when they come into the Peninsula, their first and great object will be to get the English out." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Castlereagh, 25th Aug. 1809

## CHAPTER XXXII

A NARRATIVE of the events of 1809 has already been <sup>1809.</sup> given in three different spheres of operations—the West Indies, the Scheldt, and the Peninsula. It now remains to consider those in a fourth sphere, which has for long been unnoticed, namely the Mediterranean, where Sir John Stuart still held command of some fifteen thousand men. In a previous chapter<sup>1</sup> we followed the ignoble course of his career in 1808—the loss of Capri, the triumphant advance of Murat into Calabria, and his ostentatious preparations for an invasion of Sicily, with Stuart's consequent refusal, despite the urgency of Castlereagh, to detach any portion of his troops to Catalonia. In February Admiral Collingwood again pressed upon Sir John the advantages of despatching a force to that province;<sup>2</sup> but, since St. Cyr's brilliant campaign, circumstances in that quarter had changed; while Murat's menaces still kept Stuart in nervous anxiety. Collingwood therefore proposed to him the occupation of Cephallonia and Zante, which was invited by the

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of the Brit. Army*, Vol. VI. p. 137 seq.

<sup>2</sup> "In Catalonia they want money, arms, and ammunition, of which no use appears to be made when they get them. . . . The Somatenes range the hills in a disorderly way, and fire at a distance, but retire on being approached. This state of things made me anxious that a body of English, however small, conducted by intelligent and temperate officers, should have been sent, in hopes that their presence and example might have animated the country. It was an experiment, in my own view of it—for even of the success of that I was not sanguine" (Collingwood to Mulgrave, 22nd March 1809).

1809. inhabitants, and was favoured by the Admiral as a means  
Feb. for establishing a right of interference in the future of the Ionian Islands. Stuart welcomed the idea warmly. The French garrisons in the aforesaid islands were so weak that five hundred men would suffice to overpower them. Thus there would be little risk in such an expedition, the garrison of Sicily itself would not be appreciably lessened, the Ionian Islands would serve as a partial cover to Sicily, and there would be a neat little exploit to the credit of the victor of Maida in the Gazette. Whether Collingwood's diplomatic designs against the day of a general peace might be worth the immediate multiplication of small posts, such as could easily be overwhelmed by a vigilant enemy, was a question which did not occur to him.<sup>1</sup>

April. At the beginning of April, however, Stuart was diverted from this project by the arrival of an Austrian officer, Count de la Tour, at Palermo to explain to him, as we have already seen, the plan of the Austrian campaign in Italy. The general idea was that early in April the Archduke John should cross the Isonzo and march rapidly upon the Adige, while a detachment, embarking at the head of the Adriatic under the protection of the British squadron, should menace the coast between Venice and Rimini. But besides this the Austrian Government, astounding as it may seem, was, according to this officer, in correspondence with the Italian patriots for the expulsion of the French, and for setting up a constitutional and independent kingdom in Italy with an Austrian Archduke for King. As to the part to be played by the British, de la Tour said nothing definite, only hoping that they would strike at the same time with the Austrians, and as near to their army as possible ; but the closing words of his memorandum were : " Any diversion will be useful ; time presses, and this chance will be the last." The choice of a sphere of operations was not easy, for Murat had thirty thousand men, most

<sup>1</sup> Stuart to Sec. of State, 6th, 15th Feb. 1809. *Corres. of Lord Collingwood*, ii. 317-319.

of them Italians, in the Neapolitan dominions, and a weak division in the Roman States. Collingwood was for a descent upon the coast of Tuscany ; but to such a distance Stuart dared not carry more than seven or eight thousand troops ; whereas to a point nearer Sicily he might adventure twelve thousand beside six thousand Neapolitans. In any case the British were hampered by lack of cavalry. Upon the whole Stuart inclined towards a disembarkation in Calabria. There were garrisons in Reggio and Scilla, and a chain of posts leading up to the familiar ground of Mileto and Monteleone, where there were believed to be three or four thousand men, with five or six thousand more in the neighbouring provinces of Upper Calabria, Basilicata, and the Principato. But everywhere the insurgent patriots were growing bolder, encouraged not a little by the raids of the British frigates, whose officers believed the attack of no fortified post to be beyond their powers, and acted upon the belief with astonishing audacity and success.<sup>1</sup>

The one thing needful, therefore, was prompt action. The difficulties of a right choice might excuse a commander if he selected the wrong field of operations ; but Count de la Tour had said that any diversion would be useful, and beyond doubt he spoke truth. Promptitude, however, was a quality in which Stuart was wholly lacking. The transports were equipped for sea with all stores on board, and the battalions were so distributed as to be ready for rapid embarkation ; but Stuart, lost in irresolution, did nothing. "He dawdled and fretted in his quarters, issued no orders, nor even looked at the troops."<sup>2</sup> So the precious month of April passed away in inaction, enlivened towards its close by jubilant salutes from the guns of Reggio and Scilla for the victories of Eckmühl and Ratisbon. These demonstrations did not hearten Stuart to any enterprise ; but, according to his

<sup>1</sup> "All our frigate captains are great generals and some in the brigs are good brigadiers" (Collingwood to Admiral Sotheby, 30th June 1809).

<sup>2</sup> Bunbury.

1809. own account, he had just completed the embarkation  
May. of ten thousand men for a descent upon Calabria, when there arrived the news of the Archduke John's retreat from Italy, and of Napoleon's entry into Vienna on the 13th of May. Once again the General was thrown back into his former state of indecision, if indeed he had ever emerged from it ; and he was only roused by an extremely discreditable and unpleasant occurrence.

Stuart's course of behaviour had already driven the best of his general officers to leave him and seek employment elsewhere ; and those that remained conceived a contempt for him which speedily propagated itself throughout the army. After the abandonment of his design upon Calabria, he suggested to Collingwood that a force should sail to Ischia, take possession of the island, and from thence threaten Naples. The operation would be showy, not very hazardous, and might make a brave figure in the Gazette, which was reason enough to commend it to Stuart ; but Collingwood said plainly that he failed to see what advantage could accrue from the occupation of Ischia or of any other island in the bay of Naples, and urged the despatch of troops to the Roman or Tuscan coasts. Stuart, however, thoroughly enamoured of his petty expedition, pressed forward the preparations, until one day a general officer waited upon him as the spokesman of the malcontents in the army, and remonstrated with him in language so insubordinate as practically to threaten a mutiny if the order were given to embark. Much agitated, Sir John sent for his Quartermaster-general, Colonel Henry Bunbury, whose company he had for some time sedulously avoided, and poured his tale of woe into the latter's ears. Bunbury speedily ascertained that, though a bad spirit was abroad, the mischief was less serious than Stuart had apprehended ; and it was decided that the best thing to do was to put the troops aboard ship at once, distributing them in such sort that the band of discontented officers should be broken up.

Accordingly the embarkation proceeded, and on the 1809. 11th of June the armament sailed out of Milazzo, in June 11. all thirteen thousand men, including about a thousand cavalry, seven hundred of them Neapolitans, and a brigade of Neapolitan infantry—fair soldiers under a good officer.<sup>1</sup> Six battalions remained behind to guard

<sup>1</sup> The embarkation return of 9th June is as follows :—

	Rank and File.
20th L.D. and Mounted Infantry . . . . .	284
R.A. . . . .	432
R.E. . . . .	48
Staff Corps . . . . .	35
Grenadier Battalion . . . . .	906
1st L.I. Battalion . . . . .	908
2nd L.I. Battalion . . . . .	362
1 and 2/27th . . . . .	1253
44th . . . . .	616
58th . . . . .	639
62nd . . . . .	580
81st . . . . .	656
3rd, 4th, 6th Batts. K.G.L. . . . .	2005
Watteville's . . . . .	606
Corsican Rangers . . . . .	442
	<hr/> 9772
Add one-eighth for officers and sergeants . . . . .	1230
	<hr/> 11,002

But Stuart later forwarded another return as follows :—  
Advance—

<i>Advanced Corps.</i> Brig. Lumley.	}	3078
Cavalry, 1st L.I., 81st		
<i>Advanced Brigade.</i> Maj.-Gen. Macfarlane.		
2nd L.I., Corsican Rangers, Calabrians		
<i>Reserve Brigade.</i> Brig. Oswald.		
Grenadier Batt. 1/27th, 6 cos./44th . . . . .		2194
<i>1st Brigade.</i> Lt.-Col. Smith.		
10th, 2/27th . . . . .		1181
<i>2nd Brigade.</i> Col. Airey.		
58th, 62nd . . . . .		1222
<i>3rd Brigade.</i> Col. Hinuber.		
3rd and 4th K.G.L. . . . .		1337

1809. Sicily, and to lend assistance to offensive operations  
 June 12. nearer home. On the morning of the 12th the Tenth and the Chasseurs Britanniques parted company under Colonel Haviland Smith,<sup>1</sup> and sailed through the straits of Messina for an attack upon Scilla. Stuart was strangely confident as to the effect to be produced by this detachment. Indeed, before hearing anything of its doings, he reported that upon its appearance the enemy had abandoned the greater part of their posts by the shore, and that the works upon the straits opposite to Messina had been seized and disarmed by Smith's corps. This, as shall presently be seen, was pure imagination, and the event proved that the General was equally incompetent whether as seer or commander.

The wind was very light, and the progress of the fleet very slow. Off Amantea it was joined by one hundred additional transports carrying the Neapolitan contingent under General Bourcard and Prince Leopold of Naples, who came nominally as a volunteer, but in reality to represent his august parents. Bourcard was instructed to make a demonstration off Policastro; and the main body proceeded on its weary way. Calms

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*4th Brigade.*

6th K.G.L., Watteville's, Chasseurs					
	Britanniques	.	.	.	1778
R.A.	.	.	.	.	432
R.E.	.	.	.	.	48
Staff Corps	.	.	.	.	35

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11,305

Add one-eighth for officers, sergeants, etc. . 1413

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12,718

Neither of these quite tally with the return given by Bunbury, p. 461, which gives a total of British and Neapolitans of 14,250 rank and file.

<sup>1</sup> It will thus be seen that Stuart did not stick to his distribution of brigades, but broke up two of them to put together Smith's detachment. I take the composition of Smith's force from Stuart's own despatch, which is confirmed by Bunbury, p. 364, and by Smith's casualty list; but Bunbury in his appendix, p. 461, sends the whole of Smith's brigade to Messina.

and light airs continued; the horses began to suffer severely; and water was running dangerously short when the armament at last anchored on the 24th off Cape Martino in the neighbourhood of Baia, having taken thirteen days to traverse two hundred miles. The landing-places upon Ischia and Procida were at once reconnoitred, when the batteries appeared more formidable than had been expected; but the lack of water on the transports compelled an immediate attack, and orders were issued accordingly to land at daybreak upon the eastern shore of Ischia. A line-of-battle ship, a frigate, and a swarm of gunboats, British and Sicilian, were told off to cover the disembarkation; and the two battalions of Light Infantry, the Eighty-first and the Corsican Rangers,<sup>1</sup> together with a few Calabrians and six pieces of cannon, under General Macfarlane and Brigadier Lumley, were appointed to force a landing.

Owing to the difficulty of marshalling boats in the darkness and to the weight of the launches in which the troops were embarked, it was broad daylight long before the latter were even near the island; but the enemy's batteries made a poor reply to the fire of the British ships, and their troops turned and ran, hardly attempting to engage the British light infantry. One hundred and eighty were captured on the spot, and the rest retreated into the castle, whither a summons was at once sent to the Governor to surrender. Meanwhile a like summons had been sent to Procida, where great good luck had befallen Stuart. Murat, upon hearing of the arrival of the armament, had come down in person during the night to Cape Miseno to superintend the despatch of reinforcements to that island, and had actually succeeded in passing over a hundred men into it; but the remainder were intercepted and captured, and among them the colonel selected by King Joachim to take charge of the citadel. A miserable old Neapolitan Governor, therefore, was still in command, with few troops but one of those heterogeneous

<sup>1</sup> 2380 men.



1809. battalions, composed of deserters and prisoners of all  
June 24. nations, which Napoleon was in the habit of scraping together for his minor garrisons. A few cannon-shot sufficed to frighten the Governor; his regiment of ruffians mutinied and prepared to sack the island; the inhabitants turned out to plunder the stores; and Procida was on the point of becoming a pandemonium, when General Oswald, without waiting for a formal capitulation, landed his grenadier-battalion, restored order, and took possession of the island.

But Murat's resources were not yet exhausted. Remembering what a thorn Gaeta had been in Joseph's side two years before, he had become apprehensive of a British attack on that fortress and had moved thither half of his flotilla of gunboats. These seemed likely to be cut off from Naples by the British fleet; and therefore, before Procida fell, he had sent orders to them to creep along the shore with all possible silence and secrecy, and to double Cape Miseno before day-break, when there would be no wind to enable the British frigates to stop them. Early in the morning of the  
June 26. 26th this flotilla was discovered by a Neapolitan boatman. There was a dead calm, and only six British gunboats were at hand; but these six under Lieutenant Cameron of the Twenty-first boldly attacked the thirty-four of the enemy, and clung to them with such persistent daring that time was gained for the main body of the British and Sicilian flotillas, under Captain Read of the Twenty-seventh, to come up to their assistance. A light breeze presently enabled one of the frigates to stand across the van of the enemy and cut them off, when some of the rearmost took refuge under the guns of a coast-battery. A small party of Marines, one company of the German Legion, and a few Calabrians thereupon landed, attacked and routed a party of infantry which protected the battery, and captured thirty-seven prisoners, while the seamen destroyed the vessels. In this brilliant little affair twenty-four gunboats were taken, five were destroyed,

and five only, much damaged by the shot of the frigates, 1809. contrived to escape. The casualties of the British were trifling, but the dead unfortunately included young Cameron, whose gallantry in the action had been most conspicuous.

These successes, won under the very eyes of Murat, were continued on the 27th by the Navy, when the *Cyane* of twenty-four guns under Captain Staines, aided by the *Espoir* brig, attacked a forty-gun frigate, a corvette and ten gunboats which were stealing down the coast under the protection of the shore-batteries. Such a sight can seldom have been seen since the Athenian and Syracusan armies watched the final combat of their fleets in the great harbour of Syracuse. The hills and the house-tops were crowded with people in a fever of excitement, and Murat himself came raging into the batteries to stimulate the efforts of his gunners, as the audacious British frigate, heedless of the fire from ships afloat and forts ashore, fastened on to her huge quarry and never quitted her until she reached the very molehead of Naples and staggered, almost a wreck, into the harbour. Unfortunately Staines was grievously wounded; but his bravery so stirred the Neapolitans that Murat took the severest measures to repress any attempt at insurrection.

It remained only to reduce the castle of Ischia, which, though perched upon an isolated rock, was commanded by the adjacent hills. A few days sufficed to drag up some heavy guns, and the garrison of three hundred men was compelled on the 30th of June to surrender. Altogether fifteen hundred prisoners and one hundred guns were taken, at a cost of fewer than twenty killed and wounded, so that Stuart's exploits were sufficient to fill a good despatch.

But meanwhile the detachment under Colonel Haviland Smith had not prospered in like manner. His instructions bade him to wait a few days for General Partonneaux to withdraw his troops northward, and then to besiege Scilla. Smith duly waited for the

1809. few days, and then, being informed from Messina that he might safely do so, invested Scilla. Somewhat mistrusting his intelligence, nevertheless, he took the precaution to push two companies of the Twenty-first fifteen miles northward to Palmi, in order to watch the road from Monteleone. On the following night the advanced guard of Partonneaux's division surprised the picquet of the Twenty-first, broke straight into Palmi, captured most of the two companies, and pressed on with all speed to Scilla.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately Smith, who was an excellent officer, was warned in time to embark his men and take them across the straits, abandoning his guns and stores. Scarcely had he done so when Partonneaux was recalled with every man that he could raise to the defence of Naples; whereupon on July 2. the night of the 2nd of July he blew up the castle of Scilla, threw into the sea the guns collected by Murat for the invasion of Sicily, left his British trophies to be recovered by their owners, and hastened away to the north.

Then came the question what should be done next; and this was not easy to answer. The presence of the British at Ischia kept Naples in a ferment, compelling Murat to assemble all his troops there, and to govern as in a state of siege; but the concentration of twenty-five thousand men made any attempt upon the city impossible to Stuart. Ischia, again, was an embarrassing possession, for it contained no supplies, little water, and abundance of nothing except wine; while Prince Leopold, who had now entered the island with the Neapolitan contingent, was inclined to give himself the airs of sovereignty. Stuart, who could be both strong and firm where his own dignity was concerned, peremptorily suppressed this usurpation of authority; but there his energies ended, though by this time work had arisen for him in other quarters.

<sup>1</sup> The casualties of the force were, 1 officer and 1 man killed, 9 wounded, 24 missing; 4 officers and 82 men (of the Twenty-first) prisoners.

The Austrian success at Aspern had given a new turn <sup>1809.</sup> to the war on the Danube, which had not been wholly undone by Napoleon's costly and indecisive victory at Wagram; and on the very day of Wagram Italy had <sup>July 6.</sup> been roused and shocked by the news that General Miollis had seized the Pope by Napoleon's order, and had carried him off with the utmost haste to the Alps. Colonel Bunbury urged Stuart to attack Civita Vecchia or Leghorn, or at least to make a demonstration on the north coast. The King of Sardinia asked him to co-operate in an attack on the Genoese Riviera. Stuart would not move. Neapolitan gentlemen came to Ischia to treat with him on behalf of the patriots of Italy, saying that if he would favour Italian independence, they would join him to a man to expel the French, but that if he came to restore Ferdinand, they would join the French and take arms against him. Stuart declined to see them or to send them any reply; whereupon, observing Prince Leopold to be on the spot, they concluded that Stuart's object was to re-establish the hated King. It was very evident that the General in planning his expedition had entertained no idea beyond making a military promenade.

In the second week of July came news of Smith's failure at Scilla, and of a panic which had arisen in Messina in consequence. Though he knew that every one of Murat's soldiers had been withdrawn from Calabria, Stuart at once ordered the Neapolitan troops to return to Sicily, and two days later sent Airey's brigade to join them. Yet a few days afterwards came a letter from Collingwood, recommending the evacuation of Ischia and Procida, as they were likely to prove a greater evil than even Capri had been. He also reported great activity in the naval yards at Toulon, and added a warning that, if the British squadron were blown away from the mouth of the port, as had recently happened, the Toulon fleet might very well make its way to Ischia and thence to Palermo. This came as a revelation to Stuart, for it had never

1809. occurred to him that a fleet of transports at anchor must offer a surer mark than the same fleet cruising at sea. He waited only to disarm and dismantle the two captured islands, after which, embarking his whole force, he sailed on the 26th of July, and arrived on the July 29. 29th at Milazzo. According to his own account, he was on the point of sending a detachment to Civita Vecchia when Collingwood's letter arrived ; but Stuart always contrived to delay his enterprises until something occurred to prevent them.

After this ridiculous waste of men, money, and time, Stuart subsided for two months into quiescence. In letters previous to his despatch concerning the Toulon fleet, Collingwood had renewed his proposal that an attack should be made upon Zante and Cephallonia ; but the General, on hearing of the armistice of Znaim, rejected the overtures for such an expedition, which were made at his chief's request by Admiral Martin. It was necessary for Collingwood, overworked though he was,<sup>1</sup> to write again and say that he could not see how any events in Austria could interrupt the project, and that the acquisitions obtained by the French in the Adriatic made the possession of a port at the entrance of that sea very desirable for England. Most reluctantly Sept. 23. Stuart yielded, and on the 23rd of September sent off eighteen hundred men, with Brigadier Oswald in command,<sup>2</sup> under convoy of a line-of-battle ship and two

<sup>1</sup> "I am an unhappy creature, old and worn-out. I wish to come to England, but some objection is ever made to it" (Collingwood to Mrs. Hall, 7th Oct. 1809). Two weeks later he rendered his last great service in the destruction of a small French squadron and convoy in the Gulf of Lyons, and died on his homeward voyage on the 7th of March 1810, aged fifty-nine. His death was due to overwork and prolonged confinement on board ship ; in short, he was simply killed by the Admiralty, which kept him at his post in spite of his entreaties to be relieved, because there was no man to replace him.

	Officers.	N.C.O. and Men.
<sup>2</sup> 20th L.D. . . .	1	26 (without horses).
R.A. . . . .	3	96 (with horses).
R.E. . . . .	3	14

smaller vessels. Making first for Zante, Oswald anchored in a convenient bay three miles from the town on the 1st of October, and on the following day landed six hundred men under the command of Colonel Hudson Lowe.<sup>1</sup> The little force advanced in two columns, one of which turned the defences of the town, while the other invested the castle; and the garrison, which numbered just under four hundred men of an Italian regiment, thereupon surrendered. The expedition then repaired to Cephallonia which, owing to the ability of the naval dispositions, yielded without resistance, and gave Oswald another two hundred prisoners, Italians and Albanians. Captain Richard Church was next detached with some of the Thirty-fifth and Corsicans to Ithaca, and Major Clarke with two companies of the Thirty-fifth to Cerigo; both of which islands, thanks to the good management of the two commanders, capitulated without firing a shot, and added nearly two hundred more to the tale of the captured.

The islanders welcomed the British; and Oswald incited them to make preparations for their own defence, laying the foundation of a local force and encouraging them by hoisting the Septinsular flag together with the Union Jack, as a symbol at once of their independence and of British protection. But he declared that for the present it would be impossible to withdraw the British troops altogether. The garrison of Corfu numbered over four thousand men, three-fourths of them French; and, though the island was at the time straitly blockaded, the advent even of a weak French squadron from Toulon would suffice to

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35th . . . .	35	919
44th . . . .	9	209
Corsican Rangers	32	620

Guns: two 12-pounders, two 6-pounders, two 5½ in. howitzers, four mountain guns.

<sup>1</sup> 4 cos./35th, 2 cos./44th, 2 cos. Corsican Rangers, 2 mountain guns.

1809. raise the blockade and to expose the garrisons of the newly occupied islands to capture. It may be questioned, indeed, whether Collingwood was right, as a matter of general policy, in urging the occupation of Zante and Cephallonia. He stated the case against such occupation when combating the suggestion of Mr. Adair, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, that Cerigo should be captured. "I cannot form," he wrote, "the smallest idea of the utility that could be derived from the occupation of Cerigo or of any of the little islands in the Archipelago. It would require a certain number of troops, who must be fed by provisions brought to them. . . . The garrison would require a squadron to protect them, and the services of garrison and squadron would be limited to taking care of each other."<sup>1</sup> It was only the possession of an anchorage which differentiated Zante and Cephallonia from Cerigo. On the other hand, from a purely naval point of view, the garrison of Corfu needed constant watching; and the calls upon the commander-in-chief for ships were so multitudinous that a harassed admiral might well seek to relieve his officers and crews by making the army furnish new naval stations for them. This is a point which is too much neglected in all of our naval and military plans. A vast deal of watching and scouting is expected from the Navy, but, with the exception of holding certain definite bases for the fleet, the duties of the Army are held to be offensive; and no account is taken of the new naval stations which admirals will inevitably require to be held for them, and of the consequent weakening of the offensive military force.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising, therefore, that on receiving Stuart's report respecting the occupation of Zante and

<sup>1</sup> Collingwood to Adair, 25th April 1809.

<sup>2</sup> The authority for the preceding pages of this chapter will be found in *Corres. of Lord Collingwood*, ii. 317-394. Bunbury, *Great War with France*, 359-382. *Record Office*, W.O. Mediterranean. Stuart to Sec. of State, 6th, 15th Feb., 14th, 17th, 26th April; 5th, 24th May, 9th June, 5th, 9th, 16th July, 2nd Aug., 25th, 26th Sept., 5th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd Oct. 1809.

Cephalonia the Cabinet sent him no very encouraging <sup>1809.</sup> reply. If (such was the purport of the despatch) the measure tended to the security of Sicily, without diminishing British strength in the Mediterranean, then it might be considered not inexpedient ; but no offensive operations must be undertaken in reliance upon reinforcements from home, for circumstances were more likely to dictate a reduction than an increase of the army in that quarter ; and, if Stuart were really looking for a field of operations, he might remember his instructions to make a diversion upon the east coast of Spain.<sup>1</sup> So far Ministers had uniformly accepted Stuart's statements and approved his actions ; but their despatches now showed a change of tone, which was doubtless due to information received from Colonel Bunbury, his ablest staff-officer, who had left him and returned to England in disgust. Henceforward they took a truer measure of the General's incompetence.

Meanwhile the signature of peace between Austria and France on the 13th of October had altered the entire situation in the Mediterranean. For in the first place the French army was free to reoccupy Italy and to menace Sicily ; and in the second, the treaty itself contained provisions directly calculated to extend French influence in the Adriatic, in the Levant and generally in the east of Europe. Austria had yielded up to France the whole of her maritime provinces—Trieste, Carniola, parts of Carinthia and Croatia, Fiume and Austrian Istria, which joined to French Istria, Dalmatia and Ragusa formed the Seven Provinces of Napoleon's new government of Illyria. Thus the French Empire had stretched its borders to the Balkan Peninsula ; while simultaneously the occupation of some of the Ionian Islands renewed the active competition of England with Napoleon for influence in those parts. In brief, the Eastern Question entered upon a new and acute phase for both powers ; and for

<sup>1</sup> Sec. of State to Stuart, 29th Nov. 1809.



1809. the next two years the British forces in the Mediterranean, so far as they were concerned with other matters than the supremely important duty of holding their own in Sicily, turned their face towards the East rather than to the West, towards the Levant rather than the Iberian Peninsula. It will be convenient, therefore, to follow the progress of Mediterranean affairs to the point at which the garrison of Sicily once more faced about, and devoted its superfluous energy to the east coast of Spain.

First, it will be necessary to look a little more thoroughly into the situation of Turkey. The partition of the Ottoman Empire, as we have seen, was the project which Napoleon constantly dangled before the eyes of Alexander in order to keep him firm to the alliance of Tilsit. So long, however, as the Porte was friendly to France and observed the Continental System, it suited Napoleon far better to uphold the effete Turkish government than to admit Russia to the Mediterranean. In 1807, after the British failures in the Dardanelles and in Egypt, French influence was supreme in Constantinople itself, and the Sultan Mustapha willingly closed his ports to the British; but in reality the centre of Turkish power lay not at Constantinople but at Janina. Ali Pasha, who had originally raised himself by persistent opposition to the Ottoman Government, was now become the chief support of the Ottoman Empire. It was he who by force and fraud had checked the advance of the French in the east after the fall of Venice in 1797; and, though Napoleon had tried to make good the ground lost on that occasion by the clauses in the Treaties of Pressburg and Tilsit, which gave him Dalmatia, Cattaro, and the Ionian Islands, yet the gains of Ali were coextensive with those of the French. His authority now reached over all Greece, Morea, and part of Albania; and though approaching sixty years of age, he was as active and ambitious as ever. Both sides paid court to him. Major William Leake of the Artillery—a name still

honoured by Hellenic students—at a secret meeting<sup>1809</sup> held in November 1807 had induced him to bring about a reconciliation between the Porte and England, which finally issued in a treaty of peace signed on the 5th of January 1809. A few weeks later Leake had returned with presents of stores and ammunition to be used against the French, and had remained as resident at Janina and Prevesa. Napoleon likewise had sent a consul-general, and a colonel of engineers to fortify both towns. But, though thus complaisant to both parties, Ali seems to have made up his mind that he had more to dread from the French than from the British. He divined that it was not for nothing that the Emperor had seized the island of Santa Maura and the town of Parga on the mainland before his very doors. From thence the French could open a route to Janina by the Gulf of Arta, seize the Pasha's treasures, and rally to their flag the entire population of northern Greece; or, if balked of that object by the British fleet, they could at any rate make such a demonstration upon the vulnerable side of Greece as would favour an irruption upon northern Albania from Dalmatia and Cattaro. In fact, Ali's northern frontier was never safe, so long as French menaces compelled him to devote his chief attention to his capital.

The ousting of the French from four islands within a fortnight, however, altered the Pasha's opinion not a little. He now realised that the British possessed an army as well as a fleet; not a great army which could march to Janina, yet still sufficient to deliver him in one quarter from far more formidable neighbours. From the moment when General Oswald established himself in Zante and Cephallonia, French influence began to wane at Janina; and Leake pressed Stuart to secure the Pasha finally by the capture of Corfu. Nor was it only for the sake of gaining Ali that this stroke was desirable; the reduction of the whole of the Seven Islands by England would strengthen her also at Constantinople. During the quarrel of Britain

1809. with Turkey in 1807 Sebastiani had obtained the Porte's acknowledgment of the annexation of the Seven Islands to France, although by the Treaty of Amiens they had been erected into a Septinsular Republic. Oswald, it will be remembered, had hoisted the flag of the Septinsular Republic over the captured islands; but now France declared that she would treat Turkish recognition of that Republic as a declaration of war. In abject terror the Porte bowed to the will of Napoleon; intimating, however, to Adair that England might deal with the islands as she would, unembarrassed by any claims of Turkish sovereignty. If Corfu were captured by the British, then the Sultan would recognise the Septinsular Republic; but until then, from fear of France, he must disavow its existence. Such a situation, urged Adair, could not last long. Either Corfu must fall; or before many months Turkey must quarrel with England or with France.<sup>1</sup>

Stuart felt the force of these arguments, but for the present found himself, not without justification, unable to attend to them. Not only were hostile preparations again visible on the Calabrian side of the Straits of Messina, but a succession of events had tended to stir the mischievous activity of the Court of Palermo. After many wanderings in foreign lands, Louis Philippe of Orleans had drifted to Sicily for the second time in October 1809; and, being thought by Queen Caroline to be a fit instrument for her own tortuous purposes, had received her consent and that of her consort to his marriage with their amiable daughter Marie Amélie.

Nov. 25. The ceremony took place on the 25th of November, and very soon afterwards it was reported that Louis Philippe was to become Commander-in-Chief of the Sicilian forces. The Queen for some time past had been intent upon sending a small expedition to the  
1810. coast of Calabria; and in February it was announced  
Feb. that the force would be increased to five thousand men

<sup>1</sup> Leake to Stuart, 19th Nov. 1809; and Adair to Stuart, 28th Jan. 1810, in Stuart to Sec. of State, 24th March 1810.

with Louis Philippe at its head. Stuart, rightly thinking that nothing but harm could come of this folly, strongly protested against it. His eyes were now fully opened as to the character of the Queen, and he did not hesitate to report to Downing Street that the chief use of the British army in Sicily was to guard against the insincerity of the Neapolitan Court.

But, meanwhile, another and even more important marriage suddenly altered the policy of Caroline, that namely of Napoleon himself. Childless, yet anxious to found a dynasty, the Emperor had divorced Josephine ; and, after a vain attempt to gain a Grand Duchess of Russia for his bride, had secured without difficulty the daughter of the Emperor of Austria, the Archduchess Marie Louise. The nuptial contract was signed on the 7th of February ; the marriage was celebrated by proxy on the 2nd of March ; and thereupon the conduct of the Neapolitan Queen became so suspicious that Stuart could only conclude that she had some secret understanding with Napoleon. French reinforcements were streaming into Italy, yet she now declared that the British army was a useless burden. Considering that the British Government was maintaining some fifteen thousand of its own soldiers, which was five thousand more than were required by treaty,<sup>1</sup> and paying in addition a subsidy of £300,000 a year for the Sicilian troops, all solely for the defence of Sicily, such a comment was irritating enough. But the Queen did not stop at words. She began to fit out, for no ostensible reason, a number of transports, which might well serve to bring over French battalions ; and she strove to withdraw from the Straits of Messina the Sicilian gunboats which formed an essential part of the British scheme of defence. To add to Stuart's difficulties, she sent Louis Philippe, nominally to concert with him plans for the security of the island, but really, it seems, to extort from Sir John a recognition of the Prince's status as Commander-in-Chief of the Sicilian forces. This was

<sup>1</sup> The treaty signed on 30th March 1808.

1810. particularly insulting, for negotiations had long been afoot between the British and Neapolitan Courts for vesting the British General with the command of the Sicilian troops; and there naturally ensued a lively passage of arms between Stuart and the ministers of Queen Caroline.

Sir John declared at once that he would feel honoured to receive a visit from the Duke of Orleans, but could not accept him as a military colleague without instructions from London. Louis Philippe then announced that he would come to Messina as a private individual, though still with special authority from King Ferdinand to discuss the business of the war. "If the Duke of Orleans does not offer himself in a military character," retorted Stuartly curtly, "in what light does he present himself as a concerter of operations?" Somewhat disturbed by the extreme bluntness of the General's replies, Lord Amherst, the British Minister at Palermo, answered that he did not see his way to oppose Louis Philippe's journey to Messina; weakly hinting that, after all, the Duke's appointment to be Commander-in-Chief was a question quite distinct from his proposed conference with Stuart. "If Their Sicilian Majesties press for the conference," wrote the General, "I must ask you, in accordance with my instructions, to press that I be made Commander-in-Chief of the Sicilian forces, which being granted, I shall be happy to meet His Sicilian Majesty's officers." At this juncture Amherst received a despatch from the Foreign Office, informing him that a treaty, which had recently been negotiated between the Courts of Naples and London, had been ratified without any stipulation that the command of the Sicilian troops should be given to the British General. Armed with this knowledge, the Minister fired his last shot triumphantly at Stuart. The General coolly replied that the omission of the stipulation by no means signified that the British Government had given way upon the point, and adhered to his refusal to meet the Duke of Orleans.

Throughout this affair Stuart appeared at his very best, clear-headed, sensible, and resolute ; and his firmness prevailed. The expedition to Calabria was tacitly dropped, and Queen Caroline, for the present at any rate, was thwarted.

This wrangle—so perverse is human nature—had the rather singular effect of reviving Stuart's interest in the Ionian Islands ; possibly because he foresaw that, unless he seized the moment for further enterprise at once, he might not have another opportunity of distinguishing himself. Certain it is that, when Oswald announced his intention of making an attack upon Santa Maura, Stuart, far from discouraging him, promised him reinforcements. Accordingly, on the 21st of March, March, Oswald sailed from Zante with three ships of war and an extremely heterogeneous force of twenty-five hundred men,<sup>1</sup> and anchored south of the town of Amaxichi on the same evening. On the following day the army disembarked early ; and the enemy, being driven from their coast batteries by the fire of the ships, evacuated the town and retired to the fortress. In all, the French had some sixteen hundred regular and irregular troops on the island under General Camus ; but by display of the Greek national flag nearly half of these were drawn over to the English side, and Camus had not more than a thousand men at most with whom to hold the fortress and the defensive works adjacent to it.

The conformation of the northern coast of Santa Maura is peculiar. The island is, roughly speaking, of

<sup>1</sup> 20th L.D. (all ranks included)	8
R.A.	61
R.E.	16
35th	602
Marines	225
Calabrian Free Corps	289
Corsican Rangers	551
De Roll's	224
Greek L.I.	548

Total 2533

1810. oblong shape, measuring about twenty miles from  
March 22. north to south, and seven from east to west. Amaxichi lies at the north-eastern angle; but about two miles to west of it a headland runs out for a mile to the northward in a narrow isthmus, then turns abruptly to the east in a low sandy spit for another mile to the port of Santa Maura, and thence slants as abruptly to the north-east to die away as a mere bank into the sea. Thus there is formed a quadrilateral lagoon, bounded on the south by the mainland, on the west by the headland, and on the north by the spit of sand, the fort occupying the north-eastern and Amaxichi the south-eastern angle; and the quadrilateral is closed on the eastern side by an aqueduct, thirteen hundred yards long and very narrow at the summit, which carries water from the town to the fort. The regular approach to the fort, therefore, was by way of the spit of sand, which was nowhere over thirteen hundred yards broad, and was contracted in more than one place to no more than three hundred; and the enemy had fortified this narrow pass by two redoubts and an entrenchment, regularly constructed and capable of offering such resistance that the French counted upon its delaying an enemy for a month.<sup>1</sup> Oswald divided his men into two columns, and leaving one of these, consisting of two battalions under Hudson Lowe, to watch the town and the southern end of the aqueduct, went in person with the other to reconnoitre the spit. Here, however, he found that Captain Church with his Greek infantry had already advanced and carried the first redoubt, driving the enemy back to their next entrenchment, where they could be seen in force busily engaged in strengthening their defences. This entrenchment, which extended from sea to sea, had a wet ditch and an abatis in front, mounted four guns, well flanked, and was occupied by about five hundred men. Towards the sea it was so skilfully designed as to be almost

<sup>1</sup> I gather these details from Leake's *Travels in Northern Greece*, iii. 10-12.

secure from the fire of ships. Seeing that no time was <sup>1810.</sup> to be lost, Oswald asked that the frigate *Leonidas* <sup>March 22.</sup> might stand in so as to second an assault, as far as was possible, by water ; and, summoning a mixed battalion <sup>1</sup> under Major Clarke to the support of the Greeks, formed the whole force into columns, and directed Church to lead the attack.

The Greeks accordingly moved forward, but after the manner of a skirmishing rather than a storming party, taking shrewd advantage of all shelter from the ground, until they were fairly face to face with the enemy and exposed to a heavy fire. No efforts of their officers could then induce them to go farther ; and Oswald was obliged to order up Clarke's battalion to take their place. The Marines led the way, broke through the abatis at once, and, with the remainder of the battalion at their back, charged so fiercely with the bayonet that the enemy fled at all points. Observing the rout, Lowe with great readiness led his Corsican riflemen and one company of the Thirty-fifth along the aqueduct to come in upon the rear of the fugitives. His column filed onward under an angry fire, and some of his Corsicans, shrinking before the storm of shot, fell from the narrow pathway into the sea and were drowned. The remainder pressed on, and so demoralised the flying enemy that they abandoned their remaining strong position in the isthmus and took refuge in the fort. Altogether this was a brilliant little affair, and, except in one respect, not very costly. The casualties did not exceed thirteen killed, ninety-four wounded, and seventeen drowned ; but this number included no fewer than seventeen officers, of whom one was killed, and the remainder, among whom was Church, were wounded.

It remained now to batter the fortress into submission ; which proved to be a more difficult matter than Oswald had anticipated, for the works were casemated, and the besiegers were obliged to operate upon a narrow and exposed front. Oswald therefore asked reinforce-

<sup>1</sup> 2 cos. Marines, 2 cos. De Roll's, 2 cos. Corsican Rangers.



1810. ments of Stuart, who sent him some six hundred and fifty men and twelve heavy guns. Constructing his batteries at extreme range from the fort, for the sake  
April 9. of the inhabitants, Oswald opened fire on the 9th of April, and after a week of bombardment assaulted and carried one of the enemy's outworks within three hundred yards of the rampart. From thence his riflemen, though exposed to a very heavy fire, made such  
April 16. havoc among the French artillerymen that on the 16th Camus surrendered. The total number of prisoners captured was just eight hundred, over eighty of whom were sick or wounded ; while the British casualties did not exceed forty-four killed and wounded. Among these, however, was Major Clarke, a most brilliant officer, who was slain by a casual cannon-shot.

Oswald then sent back his borrowed men to Sicily ;  
April 23. and on the 23rd, at the urgent request of Ali Pasha, betook himself to Prevesa. The old chieftain received him cordially, and declared that the French had tendered to him every kind of bribe, even to the cession of Santa Maura itself, if he would grant free passage for their soldiers to reinforce the island. Meanwhile he asked for nothing but marks of amity, though he expressed a hope that Corfu would soon be in British hands ; and he even offered ten or twenty thousand men for the defence of Sicily if the British required them. Altogether he was effusively friendly ; and, as Corfu was still blockaded by the British frigates, it is possible that his professions were sincere.<sup>1</sup>

To eastward, therefore, the situation of Sicily was greatly improved ; and this was well, for the menace  
May. from the north was becoming decidedly serious. Murat had passed and was already enforcing a law of conscription ; columns of French troops were arriving at Naples, and large bodies of them were moving down into Calabria. The attitude of the Neapolitan Court was more than ever suspicious. It had prohibited

<sup>1</sup> Stuart to Sec. or State, 24th, 26th April ; 7th May ; enclosing Oswald to Stuart, 24th March, 17th, 25th April 1809.

the export of corn to Malta, and there was almost <sup>1810.</sup> positive proof that it was in correspondence with Napoleon; for a boat, bearing a French flag of truce, being intercepted in the Straits, was found to contain a French aide-de-camp and an official messenger from Vienna carrying despatches for Palermo. The latter of these further gave information that he had been detained for five weeks at Naples, to await, as he believed, despatches, before he was sent on his way. Stuart became increasingly anxious; and just at this time he received an unexpected shock from England. The British Ministers, as shall in due time be told, had after many searchings of heart determined to trust Wellington to defend Portugal; and, to strengthen his force as much as possible, they now directed Stuart to send to the Peninsula four of his old regiments,<sup>1</sup> in exchange for three raw and sickly second battalions; adding a few weeks later that he must embark two of these battalions for Gibraltar at once, without waiting for them to be relieved. The General looked about him at the proved treachery of the Court of Palermo, at the increasing disaffection of the larger towns towards the British owing to the helplessness of their commander, at the gathering masses of troops on the north side of the Straits, and flatly declined to obey. He had now but fourteen thousand men, half of them foreigners; the Sicilian army, unpaid and unfed, was useless and disgusted with the service; the Sicilian Militia did not exist except in name. To weaken his force still further would be to invite disaster. To evacuate Sicily and withdraw the whole of his force to Portugal was an intelligible policy, but to withdraw a part of it and expose the remainder to capture or destruction was folly. So Stuart appears to have argued; nor does it seem to me that he argued amiss.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1/21st, 1/31st, 1/39th, 1/ Chasseurs Britanniques.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart to Sec. of State, 30th April (*Castlereagh Corres.* viii. 213), 1st May, 9th June 1810.

1810. By June Murat's preparations were nearly com-  
June. pleted. Twenty to twenty-five thousand men, French and Italian, were assembled at the extremity of Lower Calabria, and more were collected behind them. Their only weakness, which was of course unknown to Stuart, was that Napoleon had placed General Grenier in command of the French divisions, with secret authority to decline, at his discretion, to obey Murat's orders concerning them. All that King Joachim now needed was gun-boats, transports, and small craft; and these, in mortal dread of the British cruisers, were creeping cautiously along the coast towards the northern shore of the Straits. Meanwhile, as Stuart still pressed for the command of the Sicilian army, the Queen sent emissary after emissary to desire him to name the number of troops that he wanted, and having received his answer refused to send them. Only with the  
July. greatest difficulty did the General in July at last extort from King Ferdinand an order, which even so was never duly proclaimed or circulated, that the Sicilian General at Messina and the Sicilians at large should co-operate with the British in defence of their country; but by that time Murat had assembled nearly five hundred vessels under a chain of batteries which extended from Scilla to Reggio. It is true that he had not accomplished this without mishaps. In June the British military flotilla under Captain Read of the *Twenty-seventh* had made a dash upon one convoy, and had captured fourteen of the vessels. In July again the King's frigate *Thames* with two brigs in company attacked a flotilla of fifty small craft, and captured or destroyed twelve gun-boats and thirty-one transports. But against this was to be set the fact that the Sicilian flotilla, once so efficient and active, was almost in a state of mutiny from want of pay; and that one boat had actually deserted in the course of Read's action mentioned above. Such disaffection, shared equally by the Sicilian army, was the only result of the subsidy, now increased to £400,000 annually,

which was paid by Great Britain to the worthless Court of Naples. Finally, to gall Stuart still further, Murat had come down in person to the scene of action, and set up a magnificent pavilion and a gigantic banner on the heights of Pezzo, in full view of every British post on the Straits, with flaunting and ostentatious defiance. 1810

Some comfort, however, came to Sir John in the arrival of reinforcements from Malta, namely the Thirty-ninth Foot in July, and the Thirty-first in August, together with drafts to fill up the gaps in the battalions which were already in his garrison. The August. The despatch of these regiments to Sicily was quite contrary to the intentions of the Secretary for War, who had sent out two second battalions<sup>1</sup> from England on purpose to release them for service in Portugal. Stuart, however, for the present appropriated them; and their appearance had a very good effect in improving the bad spirit of the inhabitants. At the same time the officers of Stuart's staff laboured indefatigably to strengthen the defences of the Straits, while the military flotilla and the frigates of the Navy were sleepless in their vigilance. The Sicilian peasantry soon came down voluntarily to work at the entrenchments with excellent good will and with reassuring cries of "Long live King George." Towards their own King they felt neither loyalty nor respect; nor was this surprising, for, while his subjects and his Allies toiled to protect his dominions against invasion, the monarch employed himself chiefly in tunny-fishing, and his consort wove plots to betray Sicily to the French. The zeal of the peasantry was actually rebuked by the Neapolitan Court; and, when the wealthier classes offered their horses to draw the British guns, the Governor of Messina was instructed to use all his efforts to prevent them from fulfilling this service. It was becoming increasingly evident that either the government of Ferdinand or the British occupation of Sicily must come to an end.

<sup>1</sup> 2/14th, 2/10th.

1810. For over two months the two armies glared at each other across the Straits; and the British were beginning to dread the coming of the long nights and to doubt the possibility of maintaining always the same standard of watchfulness, when at last the day of trial came. On

Sept. 17. the night of the 17th of September two battalions of Corsicans and four of Neapolitans, in all between three and four thousand men, under General Cavaignac, crossed the Straits and reached the shore about seven miles to the south of Messina. The landing was instantly detected by the patrols of the Twentieth Light Dragoons; the news reached headquarters at a quarter

Sept. 18. past four on the morning of the 18th; and Major-general Campbell, the adjutant-general, at once galloped down to assume the command of the troops in that quarter. The coming of dawn also revealed the embarkation of Murat's soldiers along the whole length of the narrow part of the Straits from Pezzo to Scilla. It was therefore evident that Cavaignac's landing was a diversion to distract attention to the British right. Guided by the sound of musketry Campbell galloped towards Mili, where he found two companies of German riflemen skirmishing briskly with the enemy's boats, while the Twenty-first, the Third Battalion of the German Legion and two guns stood at hand to give support, the whole being very judiciously disposed under the command of Colonel Adam of the Twenty-first. When daylight came Campbell perceived further to the south forty large vessels, from which infantry were landing between San Stefano and Gelati. As soon as a complete battalion had been disembarked, these troops pushed on to the lowest spur of the mountains adjoining their landing-place; and, as their object seemed to be to gain the heights above, and from thence to fall upon the rear of Stuart's main body between Messina and the Faro, Campbell hastened to occupy the passes above Mili.

Meanwhile a battalion composed of light companies under Colonel Fischer hastened up from Placido upon

the enemy's flank ; and the peasants, summoned by the bells of every village-church, came swarming out with such arms as they could find to crown the summits of the mountains, exhibiting unexpected enthusiasm for the British and hostility towards the invaders. Fischer, dividing his men into two bodies, sent one to harass the enemy's parties as they disembarked, and the other to assail the left flank of those who were already moving inland. These last, a Corsican battalion, halted as if waiting for support ; but Cavaignac's main body, galled by Fischer's riflemen, showed less and less disposition to quit their boats or to advance from the shore ; and Campbell, observing their hesitation, ordered Adam to march with his whole force along the strand upon their right flank. Thereupon the enemy made a rush for their boats, and shoved off, under a heavy fire from Adam's musketry and artillery, with such precipitation that they left over two hundred scattered men upon the beach, who at once threw down their arms and cried for quarter. Campbell then turned Fischer's corps and the Twenty-first against the isolated Corsican battalion on the hill, which, after some demur, surrendered, to the number of eight hundred and fifty of all ranks. The military flotilla pursued the flying boats of the enemy and captured four ; and altogether the venture can hardly have cost Murat fewer than twelve hundred men in killed, wounded and prisoners, whereas the loss of the British did not exceed three men wounded. Meanwhile the main body of the enemy between Pezzo and Scilla made no attempt to cross the Straits, principally, it seems, because General Grenier refused to risk the French divisions under his command in such an attack. Thus Murat's great venture came to a ridiculous conclusion ; thanks, less to the energy of Stuart, who did not even know the stations of the various corps under his command, than to the zeal and readiness of his staff.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the action see Stuart to Sec. of State, 22nd Sept., enclosing Campbell's report ; and Bunbury, pp. 400-403, 466-471.

1810. A few days later Murat set out for Naples, leaving orders for the gradual withdrawal of his forces, both naval and military ; which, if his operations had really been ruined, as has been stated, by Grenier, was no very unnatural nor unreasonable action. One division of the flotilla was met by a British squadron of frigates and brigs, who took or destroyed sixty transports and two gun-boats ; but the remainder were safely brought into Naples. Of the troops eight thousand only were left under General Lamarque about Scilla ; but, as the whole of the siege-artillery was also stored in that fortress, Stuart and his staff counted upon an early renewal of the attempt to invade Sicily. Meanwhile the General received a stinging reproof from the Secretary of State for War, who was furious at his refusal to send four of his battalions, as he had been ordered, to Spain. Sir John, however, stood up boldly for his own conduct, and still declined to part with more than one battalion,<sup>1</sup> asking leave to resign his command in view of the reduction of his force. After Murat's whole flotilla had returned to Naples he did indeed prepare, according to his own statement, to send the three remaining battalions to Spain as soon as shipping should arrive ; but when transports at last came in from Lisbon
1811. in February 1811, Stuart adhered to his refusal to  
Feb. despatch the men. The orders from England respecting them were still conditional upon the removal of all danger to Sicily, either through the retreat of the French forces, the improved state of the Island's defences, or a successful action. Sir John maintained that the conditions had not been fulfilled. Murat's flotilla was, it was true, no longer at Reggio and Scilla, but it was still assembled at Naples, and, if it could retire safely from the straits to the capital, it could also return from the capital to the straits. Two-thirds of the troops had marched northward, and had been employed by Murat in savage repression of the Calabrian insurgents and banditti. But that repression was accom-

<sup>1</sup> The Chasseurs Britanniques.

plished before the end of the year, and the army was <sup>1811.</sup> then at liberty to return. Above all, so long as King Ferdinand and Queen Caroline were allowed to carry on the government of Sicily, there was and there could be no safety, much less any power of offence, for the British garrison.

It was long since John Moore, with his usual keen insight, had urged this point upon the British Government; and the time was now come when it could no longer be ignored. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1810-1811 the Neapolitan Court continued to broach specious proposals for joint operations, and ridiculous plans for taking the offensive; but there was no overlooking the fact that when Murat made his attack on the 18th of September, not a Sicilian soldier had been moved to assist in the defence. On the other hand, the feeling of the Sicilian peasantry towards the British had shown itself to be surprisingly friendly; while Murat's bloodthirsty reprisals on the Calabrian *Masse* had estranged every class of Italian from the French. But in the spring of 1811 the Court of Palermo set all Sicily in a ferment by the arbitrary levy and exaction of a new tax; and then more than ever was seen the false position of the British garrison. On the one hand, the British were the only bulwark against the hated French; and this was felt so strongly by the people that the mere appearance of the troop-ships from Lisbon had sufficed to throw them into agitation.<sup>1</sup> On the other, the red-coats, being equally the only support of the wretched King and of the profligate Queen, were actually upholding the very parties who were in league with France, and who, by their miserable and oppressive misgovernment, were driving the Sicilians to desperation. Yet the British were expecting both Court and people to join with them in holding the French at bay. The unhappy Sicilians, thus lying between hammer and anvil, were at once ready to turn against both parties; while Ferdinand and Caroline, comfort-

<sup>1</sup> Stuart to Sec. of State, 24th Feb. 1811.



1811. ably nurtured by British subsidies, conspired alike against their subjects and their Allies.

The time was now arrived when this situation, one of the many evil legacies bequeathed by Pitt, must come to an end. Under Pitt's system of squandering troops in small detachments upon all quarters, an isolated force was perhaps less useless in Sicily than elsewhere; but, now that the British army had been committed in appreciable strength to serious and continuous operations in the Peninsula, the case was altered. It was indeed practically impossible to evacuate the island abruptly and completely after an occupation of six years, the more so as it would signify not only the abandonment of the people to the French, but also the alienation of Ali Pasha. But it was perfectly possible to strengthen the British military commander by making him chief diplomatic agent, and, by establishing such a government as would encourage the Sicilians to work heartily for their own salvation, to enable some thousands of British troops to be safely withdrawn to the Peninsula. And such was the policy which the British Cabinet was now inclined to adopt. At the end of March 1811, Stuart left the command in Sicily to Lord Forbes and retired to Malta, where in the following month he learned that his resignation had been accepted, and that Lord William Bentinck was not only to succeed him as Commander-in-Chief, but to combine with his military duties those of Minister at the Court of Palermo.

Here, therefore, we take leave for ever of Sir John Stuart, who did no further work that is worthy of mention, and died in 1815. Considering that he was neither a weak nor an incapable man, his career was singularly disappointing, and his shortcomings in the Mediterranean were more serious than they should have been. It is true that his position was extremely difficult, for he was the instrument of a Government which did not know its own mind; and the policy which he was expected to carry out was, so far as the Cabinet

attempted to define it, impracticable. But, on the other 1811.  
hand, it is not only the opportunity but the duty of a man in such a case to think out a policy for himself and to execute it unflinchingly ; and if Stuart had only reflected a little more upon that which he could do, and a little less upon that which he was ordered to do, he might have rendered essential service and gained a great reputation. The British Ministry never recognised the possibilities of successful and systematic offence which were offered by the Mediterranean ; but no man ever had such a chance of realising those possibilities by practical demonstration as had Stuart. Yet he took no advantage of it ; not because he was afraid of responsibility, but because his energy and intelligence were sapped by intense egoism. He had once accidentally blundered upon a brilliant success, and, had he been a stupider man, he would have felt encouraged to try his fortune again, and might have blundered into a second. But, like many others before and after him, he was too shrewd to risk an undeserved reputation, and the evil result is that he is still remembered with some honour as the victor of Maida. The greater, therefore, is the need to record his true demerit, without malice but without mercy, as a corrupter of discipline, an undoer of good spirit, and a betrayer, not the less dangerous because unwitting, of the honourable trust of a soldier.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stuart to Sec. of State, 9th, 15th, 16th, 25th, 26th Oct., 16th, 20th Dec. 1810 ; 24th Feb., 25th March, 17th April 1811. Bunbury's narrative unfortunately closes with the year 1810.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

1809. PARLIAMENT was prorogued on the 10th of June 1809 ; and many important events had occurred at home as well as abroad before it reassembled on the 23rd of January 1810. In August the Duke of Portland was struck down by a fit while in his carriage ; and, though he rallied for the moment, was obviously no longer in a condition to remain at the head of the Government. At that time both the war in Spain and the expedition to Walcheren seemed still to be in a prosperous way ; so that to all appearance there was no reason why the existing Ministry should not continue in power under a new chief, advantage being taken of the change to transfer Castlereagh from the War Office to some other department. In this sense Perceval wrote to Canning on the 28th of August ; and was answered on the 31st that a chief Minister, as contrasted with a mere figure-head, and that Minister in the House of Commons, was essential to the satisfactory conduct of Government at such a time. Canning then frankly avowed that such a Minister could be found in the person either of himself or of Perceval, that he did not expect Perceval to serve under him, and would not himself serve under Perceval. This was a blow to the members of the administration, for Canning had so far expressed his readiness to take office under Lord Chatham,<sup>1</sup> and there was as yet no news from the Scheldt which could make such an arrangement impossible. After some hesitation Perceval replied that,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Plumer Ward*, i. 215.

while regretting greatly that Canning would not consent 1809. to serve together with himself under some third person, he must himself decline to be subordinate to Canning. So matters stood, when in the first days of September Sept. there came the evil tidings that Wellesley had retreated from Talavera, abandoning a large number of his wounded ; and that Chatham, having decided to give up further operations on the Scheldt, was bringing his army back to England,—in brief, that all the military enterprises of the Government had miscarried.

Thereupon Canning wrote to the Duke of Portland, claiming it as due to himself and to the country that Castlereagh should be removed from the War Office, and replaced, as had been previously suggested, by Lord Wellesley. In great agitation, for Canning's most recent words and actions had led him to expect no such sudden and uncompromising demand, the Duke consulted Perceval, and on the 6th of September informed Canning that, if Castlereagh's withdrawal were insisted upon, other members of the Cabinet would withdraw with him. He offered, however, to retire himself at once, and so to enable the various departments to be redistributed without scandal or unpleasantness ; to which Canning replied that, if the Duke left office, he would do likewise. Canning's next step was to request that a particular subject might be discussed in Cabinet on the 7th during his absence, for he considered his resignation Sept. 7. to be in the King's hands ; and on that day Castlereagh drew from Lord Camden the whole story of Canning's machinations against himself. Little less incensed against Camden for concealing the matter from him for so long, than against Canning himself, Castlereagh resigned ; whereupon the Duke of Portland resigned also. Thus the Government was broken up ; though Perceval, as it seems, did not immediately despair of finding a third person under whom both Canning and himself could hold office together. Canning, however, ended all such hopes by writing to the Duke of Portland that the best arrangement would be for Perceval to

1809. become First Lord of the Treasury, and that for his own part he, though unable to take office under the new Prime Minister, would accept the position without the smallest dissatisfaction or regret. Having done so, he proceeded by discreditable intrigues to endeavour to set Perceval aside and to secure the chief place for himself. These treacherous shifts met with no success;

Sept. 20. and on the 20th Canning was reminded by a challenge from Castlereagh that his conduct towards that Minister had not been satisfactorily explained. The two states-

Sept. 22. men met with pistols on the 22nd; Canning was carried off the field with a wound, troublesome but not dangerous, in his thigh; and the immediate personal quarrel between the two for the present subsided.

It is impossible to doubt that the misunderstanding between them was due very greatly to the feebleness of the Duke of Portland, whose only excuse was his age and infirmity; but the true reason for it lay in the natural antipathy of the two men towards each other. The main difference between them turned, as we have seen, upon the question of responsibility. Canning's theory, to put it in its most dignified form, was that the maintenance of the Government was the first great object, to which all others must be subordinated. Hence he had been for sacrificing every one of the generals concerned in the Convention of Cintra, not excepting Arthur Wellesley, and for saddling Moore with the entire blame for the failure of the campaign of Coruña. Nevertheless he had presently taken the Wellesleys as a family to his bosom, blamed Castlereagh for not sending out Arthur Wellesley earlier to Portugal, and accepted from Lord Wellesley what may be called a dormant resignation of the embassy in Spain, to be presented in the event of his own resignation of office. Moreover he had, with extremely questionable taste, invited Henry Wellesley, though unsuccessfully, to be his second in the duel against Castlereagh. In Canning's opinion a Government was lowered when it stooped to save a public servant; and his object in

turning against Castlereagh seems to have been to show <sup>1809.</sup> the latter that, if a Minister took upon himself the failings of a subordinate, that Minister must be content to accept the scapegoat's lot and to be driven into the wilderness. Canning's theory is intelligible, and may be supported by abundance of specious argument; but experience has shown, most notably in the case of Palmerston, that no Minister is so well served as one who, even when disapproving of the action of an underling, stands up for him loyally so long as he has acted honestly and with good intent. Many indeed put the assumption of responsibility by Ministers for the acts of their instruments upon a higher plane than that of expediency, and pronounce it a matter of honour; though Canning, not being an honourable man, would have been unable to seize this point of view. And if it were inevitable that either Canning or Castlereagh must be excluded from office until the end of the war, it was better that Canning, the crooked, should stand aside.

Meanwhile, his resignation carried with it that of his friend Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, the Secretary-at-War, making, with the retirement of the Duke of Portland and of Castlereagh, no fewer than four places vacant in the Cabinet. The survivors, headed by Perceval, informed the King that they could not form a new Government without help from the Opposition, and obtained his leave to negotiate with Lords Grey and Grenville. These noblemen, however, rejected even the hint of an overture; and it was then decided that it would be best to make Perceval First Lord of the Treasury, and to give him a free hand to gather support wherever he might choose to seek it. Perceval, accordingly, accepted the office on the 4th of October, <sup>Oct. 4.</sup> and turned to the three leaders from whom he hoped to gain an accession of strength, Lord Melville, Lord Sidmouth, and Lord Wellesley. The two first declined to aid him, and Canning did his best to make the third do likewise. By the 2nd of October he had recovered

1809. sufficiently from his wound to ask an audience of the King, when he took the opportunity to present Lord Wellesley's dormant resignation, and to obtain the appointment of Bartholomew Frere in his stead. In strictness, of course, Canning was within his rights, for his successor at the Foreign Office had not yet been appointed, and Perceval was not yet Prime Minister ; moreover, he may have thought himself bound to do what he did for Lord Wellesley, though it can hardly have been without hope of embarrassing Perceval. Fortunately, the new Prime Minister heard what had been done before the packet started for Spain, and was able to write to Wellesley explaining the whole matter. In due time Wellesley replied, readily accepting the Foreign Office ; and in the interval Perceval, though unable to persuade any of the Opposition to join him, completed the construction of his Ministry. Being unable to find a Chancellor of the Exchequer, he himself took that post, without salary, together with the First Lordship of the Treasury ; Lord Liverpool gave up the Home Office to Mr. Richard Ryder, and took over the departments of War and Colonies ; Lord Mulgrave remained at the Admiralty ; Lord Palmerston, a rising young man of five-and-twenty, became Secretary-at-War ; and Mr. Robert Peel Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

It was a weak administration, though it contained three future Prime Ministers, and it took office at a moment of intense discouragement. The retreat of Arthur Wellesley and the return of Chatham had been two heavy blows ; yet they might have been endured with hopefulness but for the fact that Austria also had been forced to make a humiliating peace. She had not only ceded, as we have seen, all her maritime provinces on the Adriatic to France, but she had further yielded the district of the Inn and Salzburg to Bavaria ; she had recognised the French conquest, not yet accomplished, of Portugal, and the kingship of Joseph and Murat in Spain and Naples ; and she had bound herself to break

with England, to accept the Continental System, and to 1809. pay an indemnity of nearly three and a half millions sterling. The rupture with England was in itself nothing very formidable in the matter of actual aggression, being understood on both sides to be merely formal; but, on the other hand, the marriage of Napoleon with an Austrian Archduchess seemed to portend at least the elimination of Austria, as an active helper against France, from any future coalition. From Prussia less than ever was now to be expected; from Russia, bound as she was by the Treaty of Tilsit, there was as yet equally no hope; so that England was left without an ally in Europe except the formless and inefficient governments of Spain and Portugal. And the hardest part of the trouble was that all the mis-carried enterprises of the past year had only narrowly missed brilliant success. The Austrians had won a victory at Aspern and had only just been beaten at Wagram. Wellesley's campaign had been wrecked rather by Cuesta and Venegas than by Soult; while, though he had retreated from Talavera, he had at least delivered Portugal and helped the Spanish insurgents to deliver Galicia. Even the landing in the Scheldt had, as we know, caused a panic in Paris and treachery in Fouché. Could British Ministers have seen the Emperor's letters to Clarke during the month of August, his reiterated statements that Flushing was impregnable, the violent reproaches over his subordinate's slowness in enrolling troops, and his pungent criticism of his generals in Spain, they would have perceived that their perseverance was beginning to tell. Their great enemy was slowly losing his sense of reality and his hold upon facts, owing to the vast extension of the business, both civil and military, which he was attempting in his own person both to survey and to direct.

These things, however, were of course almost entirely hidden from the Cabinet and were totally invisible to the nation. The people could see nothing but armies squandered by generals, and Ministers, who



1809. tried to dress up defeat as victory. Party spirit, as usual, was active to distort facts and to embitter discontent. The city of London, in particular, distinguished itself by the violent tone of the address in which it demanded inquiry into the causes of the national misfortunes. The general temper in Britain was such that it would have welcomed the impeachment and execution of a Minister. All this was natural enough, and for that reason easily to be foreseen. Yet not the less did Spencer Perceval come forward with undaunted spirit to face the storm; and for this he has never received sufficient credit. Perceval was minute in stature, the father of a large family, a successful advocate, a strong evangelical Churchman, and therefore a consistent opponent of Roman Catholic claims; one and all of which peculiarities brought upon him some of the vulgarest of Sydney Smith's humour. Even in our own time an eminent historian has summed him up as "an industrious mediocrity of the narrow type." Not a word is said as to the talent in debate, which made Pitt designate him as his successor; not a word as to the uprightness and integrity which attached his followers to him;<sup>1</sup> not a word as to the public spirit which made him, a poorer man than Pitt, and with many children to support, first sacrifice a large professional income, and then refuse a sinecure with as haughty indifference as Pitt himself; not a word, finally, as to the courage which of itself sufficed to raise him above mediocrity. His career was cut short by the hand of an assassin before he could share in the credit of having carried the war to a successful issue; but in this place at least his service must not remain uncommemorated, because he endured the dust and heat of the race without gaining the immortal garland.

1810. On the 23rd of January Parliament met; and, after Jan.

<sup>1</sup> We must fix this honest little fellow firmly in his seat," wrote Robert Milnes (who had refused office under Perceval) to Palmerston, "for it is a struggle of principle on the one hand against trimming and political intrigue on the other."

a preliminary skirmish over the King's speech, the parties closed in a desperate struggle over a vote of thanks to the General who, in reward for the victory of Talavera, had been created Viscount Wellington. There was, undoubtedly, much in the late campaign that laid it open to fair attack; and there was a general consensus of opinion among the critics that a General who could not divine that fifty thousand of the enemy were marching upon his flank could know nothing of his business. But they were not content with this. In the Lords, Earl Grey, out of the fulness of his military knowledge, and such intimate acquaintance with the campaign as he had gathered from the newspapers, added unfavourable comment upon Wellington, both as a strategist and as a tactician. In the Commons Lord Milton, after declaring with singular delicacy of taste that Wellington had fought merely for a peerage, moved an amendment to omit his name from the vote of thanks, and to add the regrets of the House that after the battle the officers and men "had suffered the enemy to pass two days in inactivity without attacking them, and also for having allowed themselves to be cut off at the bridge of Arzobispo." Mr. Vernon passed the just criticism that Wellington should have learned more from the experience of Moore, but added a suggestion that his march to Talavera had been undertaken only to shelter Ministers from the charge of inactivity. This he followed up by saying that he was for sending the Spaniards everything that would assist them, except a British army. General Tarleton contended that Wellington's despatches were vainglorious, partial, and incorrect. Whitbread "could not agree to give a premium to rashness." The Spanish cause, he said, was now more hopeless than ever.

The controversy was renewed upon the bill to grant Wellington an annuity of £2000, against which the city of London presented a singularly offensive petition. Mr. Calcraft declared that Talavera was no victory. "It had been swelled into a victory only by the

1810. influence of political connection in order to get Lord Wellington advanced to the peerage." He then indulged in prophecy. "All he knew was that, if the French were in earnest in their designs on Portugal, before three months Lord Wellington and his army would be in England." However, in spite of these amenities the bill was carried, not indeed without a division, as was the vote of thanks, but by a substantial majority.<sup>1</sup>

The question of Walcheren was rightly not allowed  
Jan. 26. to be so easily set aside. On the 26th of January Lord Porchester moved that a committee of the whole House should inquire into the causes of the failure of the expedition, and carried his motion by a majority of nine in a House of three hundred and eighty-one. The inquiry accordingly was conducted in extreme detail, and at its conclusion was debated at equal length, no man distinguishing himself more by prolixity than General Robert Craufurd, who had returned home, together with General Charles Stewart, to attend to his Parliamentary duties. Divisions were taken upon four

March 30. separate issues on the 30th of March, and in every one the Government had a majority, the lowest being twenty-three and the highest fifty-one. In the course of the inquiry, however, an adverse motion was carried in censure of Lord Chatham for submitting a secret narrative of the expedition to the King; and he was compelled to resign the office of Master-General of the Ordnance.

As regards future policy, the question of continuing the fight for Portugal was raised by a Royal message, inviting the Commons to provide for taking the increased number of thirty thousand Portuguese troops into British pay. Lord Grenville opposed the project bitterly in the Lords, declaring the defence of Portugal to be hopeless, even if the thirty thousand men were not raw Portuguese, but seasoned British troops; and Lord Moira took up much the same line. Lord Liverpool, however,

<sup>1</sup> *H.D.* xv. 130-154, 277-302, 440-467, 605-606.

withstood them manfully, laying particular stress upon <sup>1810</sup> the fact that in the Peninsula the French were opposed, not by armies, but by whole nations ; and the Government carried their point by a sufficient majority.

Still, in the prevailing temper of the Opposition, the Army estimates were not allowed to pass without an outcry for petty economies ; and Palmerston, knowing the favourite butt of his critics, was obliged to humour them by reducing the Royal Waggon-Train from twelve troops to seven, that is to say, to five troops actually serving in the Peninsula, and two at home to furnish them with recruits. It is really astonishing to observe how vindictive was the feeling of the Commons towards this unfortunate corps, which represented the one little effort of the Horse-Guards towards putting the service of transport on a military footing. "Let the British Army go where it may," said General Tarleton, who ought to have known better, "it will always get waggons enough." "The Waggon-Train is an annoyance on foreign service and useless at home," echoed Huskisson, who, having been connected with the Treasury, in which department the business of transport had for generations been mismanaged, was of course jealous of encroachments upon its importance. Windham lamented that he had not had time when at the War Office to destroy the Waggon-Train altogether, though he had done his best. In vain Perceval represented that Wellington had reported the corps to be of material service in Portugal ; such testimony carried little weight ; and in fact, to anticipate the sequel, the General was obliged to take the matter into his own hands. Two troops were sent out in the course of 1810 to the Peninsula with orders that he should send back two in their stead to be disbanded ; whereupon Wellington replied that they were so useful that he would keep all four, and so saved them. Thus the Opposition did its best to cause the British army to be withdrawn from the Peninsula, or at least to cripple its mobility if it were left there ; two facts which

1809. enable us to take the measure of their intelligence concerning military affairs.

There remained the question of providing soldiers for another campaign. The casualties in the Regular Army in 1809 amounted to nearly ten thousand men, no surprising figure, considering that the army had been engaged in active operations in such unhealthy climates as those of Martinique, the Lower Scheldt, and the Guadiana. Under Castlereagh's Militia Enlistment Act of March 1809, fifteen thousand recruits had been drawn from the Militia by March 1810; but a quota of about six thousand men was due from the Irish Militia, and nearly ten thousand had been raised during 1809 by ordinary recruiting. There was thus material enough for the Regular Army; but it must be remarked that Castlereagh's system of voluntary enlistment had not proved very successful in the Militia. Of the number required to make good the drain of Militiamen into the Army, hardly one-fourth had been obtained in eight months; and the arrangements for the ballot, which was to supplement the voluntary system after a given time, were so faulty that even by the end of 1810 the gaps in the Regular Militia had not been replenished. The Local Militia, again, was hardly fulfilling its early promise, and was beginning to prove itself a very costly force. Both of these matters furnished cause for anxiety, for if the army drew the bulk of its recruits from the Regular Militia, and the Regular Militia could not replace them, then obviously such a system of recruiting must die a natural death. And if the Local Militia, which was supposed to defend the country when the Regular Militia was depleted, was not regularly called out and drilled, it was equally obvious that it could not be trusted as an organisation for home-defence.

Having now traced the effect of the campaigns of 1809, and the general trend of affairs at home during the first months of 1810, let us turn to the minuter details concerning the war in the Peninsula. Upon

returning to his cantonment on the Guadiana, Wellington had written very fully to Castlereagh on the general state of affairs. He began by a description of the Spanish armies, unfavourable, but not more so than was warranted by facts ; and by deducing that no good could come of further co-operation with them in Spain. Having thus eliminated this matter, he passed to consideration of Portugal and of the reforms that were necessary in the Portuguese army, and offered a definite conclusion. "My opinion is that we ought to be able to hold Portugal if the Portuguese army and Militia are complete." Having laid this down, he pointed out that, the whole country being frontier, "he could not hope to preserve much more than the capital, and that it would be difficult, so far as he could then judge, to ensure the re-embarkation of the troops if the defence of Lisbon were carried to extremities." None the less, he recommended that the transports should be sent to Lisbon as soon as the Government should receive positive intelligence that Napoleon was reinforcing his armies in Spain. Such reinforcement he looked upon as certain, for it would be now more than ever the object of Napoleon to drive the British from the Peninsula. He granted that Cadiz might be substituted for Lisbon as a base, but deprecated the change : first, because the Spaniards would be unwilling to cede the place ; and, secondly, because the city would require, if it were to be safe, a garrison of fifteen or twenty thousand British over and above the field army. Upon the whole, he pronounced decidedly in favour of defending Portugal.<sup>1</sup>

In sending this information thus early, Wellington only anticipated the wishes of the Government. Canning, with his usual busy restlessness, had sought for the General's opinion upon these very points in August through the Ambassador at Seville ; and Castlereagh's request for the same, despatched a month later, crossed Wellington's answer at the end of September. Never-

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley to Castlereagh, 25th August 1809.

1809. theless, the General's opinion was still only provisional ; for, as he had written to Castlereagh, he had not yet made up his mind as to the possibility of a safe evacuation of Portugal after fighting to the last to retain Lisbon. To come to a decision upon this point, he paid a visit of sixteen days to the Portuguese capital  
Oct. 10-26. in October ; and there, after examining the ground, he on the 20th addressed a memorandum to Colonel Fletcher of the Engineers, directing him to fortify two lines of defence from the sea to the Tagus between Torres Vedras and Castanheira. This done, he sought the Admiral's advice as to four different points of embarkation—Peniche on the Atlantic, Paço d'Arcos, San Julião and Bugio on the Tagus, and Setubal on the next inlet to south of that river—pending the receipt of which he was unable to proceed farther.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, Lord Liverpool had succeeded Castlereagh at the War Office, and had scarcely been sworn in before he wrote Wellington a private letter on the 20th of October. Herein he declared that it must be the Government's policy to remain in Portugal so long as the country could be held without risk of losing the army ; he asked once more Wellington's views as to the possibilities of defending Portugal against a French invasion, and of embarkation if resistance proved to be fruitless ; and he put forward sagacious reasons for hope that, while Spain was unsubdued, Napoleon could not spare a sufficient force to drive the British from the Peninsula. On the 14th of November Wellington gave his final opinion. " If the Spaniards are commonly prudent . . . it must be a very large reinforcement indeed which would give the enemy military possession of the country. . . . Unless the Spanish armies should meet with some great misfortune, the enemy could not make an attack upon Portugal ; and, if events in Spain should enable the enemy to make such an attack, the force at present in Portugal is able to defend the country. . . . I am convinced we could embark after defeat." Thus

Ministers and General were at one, independently of 1809. each other, as to the policy of defending Portugal, if it could be carried out ; while the General was now positive that such a defence could be, and should be, accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

“If the Spaniards are commonly prudent.” This was a condition whose fulfilment was hardly warranted by past experience ; but, before going farther, the state of the Spanish forces throughout the Peninsula must be reviewed ; and it is necessary to turn for a moment to eastern and north-eastern Spain, or more precisely to Aragon and Catalonia. The subjection of the former, it will be remembered, had been entrusted to General Suchet with the Third Corps ; and an account has already been given of the manner in which he defeated Blake at Maria and Belchite. This victory, however, gave him control of little more than the plain of the Ebro ; for the Aragonese, following the example of the Galicians, now abandoned regular warfare, and confined themselves to guerilla operations in the mountains both north and south of the province, in four separate bands, each under its own chief. The suppression of these parties and the capture of their fastnesses kept Suchet’s troops busy during the last six months of 1809 ; and his columns met with considerable success, for in the south the two principal strongholds of the guerillas were stormed and destroyed, and their garrisons driven far back into the mountains.

Other bands, however, of which more shall presently be said, were still in full activity ; and there could be no security while they remained so. For any weakening of the French garrisons near the mountains was sure to bring the guerillas down upon them ; and it was therefore necessary for Suchet to occupy a vast number of places, and to occupy them in some force.

<sup>1</sup> Canning to Lord Wellesley, 12th Aug. ; Wellington to Villiers, 12th Sept. ; to Colonel Fletcher, 20th Oct. ; to Admiral Berkeley, 26th Oct. ; to Lord Liverpool (2 letters), 14th Nov. ; Liverpool to Wellington, 20th Oct. 1809.



1809. Though he had accomplished much in 1809, he still held little more of Aragon than was overshadowed by French bayonets.

In Catalonia, St. Cyr and the Seventh Corps were absolutely isolated from their colleagues in Aragon. Our last sight of St. Cyr was on his adventurous march through the mountains to Barcelona, his victory at Cardadeu, his subsequent advance towards Tarragona, and his second victory of Valls, followed by his withdrawal, owing to lack of supplies, once more to the Catalonian capital. Barcelona, however, was still greatly straitened. It was strictly blockaded to seaward by the British fleet; the *migueletes* still hovered about it on the north and west; and lastly, the fortress of Gerona still barred its direct communication with France. Perceiving that Gerona must be taken at all costs, Napoleon prepared to reinforce St. Cyr strongly during the spring of 1809; and he was aided by a lucky storm at the end of April, which enabled a fleet of storeships from Toulon to evade the blockading squadron and to revictual Barcelona. At this time St. Cyr lay with some twenty thousand men at Vich to cover the siege of Gerona from any attack from the south, a superfluous precaution, as the event proved; for Blake, who held supreme command in Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, had, as we have seen, preferred Zaragoza for his object and Suchet for his adversary, with results disastrous to himself. The only troops opposed to St. Cyr, therefore, were six thousand men at Tarragona under the Marquis of Coupigny, who had been well beaten under Reding, and were therefore formidable neither in numbers, quality, nor leadership.

May 4. Early in May, General Reille moved down from the north with a siege-train and a reinforcement of thirteen German battalions, which brought his force up to between eleven and twelve thousand men; and St. Cyr sent up a complete division to open communication with him. The division, having

fulfilled its function, returned with the Emperor's 1809. orders that St. Cyr himself should be superseded by Marshal Augereau, and Reille by General Verdier. The column brought with it also a letter from Verdier, saying that he could not undertake the siege of Gerona without reinforcements, that he had reported as much to Paris, and that, if reinforcements were denied him, he should not attempt the operation, but should leave St. Cyr himself to answer to the Emperor for the consequences. St. Cyr was not the most complaisant of men; he had already been irritated by a preposterous order from Napoleon to begin the sieges of Gerona, Tarragona, and Tortosa simultaneously; he was naturally not well pleased at his supersession; and yet he was obliged for the present to continue in command, for Augereau had been detained at Perpignan by sickness. With no very good grace he sent Verdier four thousand men; and on the 24th of May the siege May 24. began.

The defence of Gerona is the grandest of all the achievements of the Spaniards during the war; but only the barest outline of the story can be given in this place. The fortress itself was of no great size, nor of the most modern construction. The garrison numbered something under six thousand more or less well-trained troops, of which seven battalions were regulars; but the artillerymen were very few. The Commander-in-Chief was the Governor, Don Mariano Alvarez de Castro, who, as a soldier, seems to have been of the austere type of Carnot, but with resolution heightened by deep religious faith. He was, however, no mere fanatic, but a strong man and skilful officer. The French broke ground on the 6th of June, and on June 6. the 20th St. Cyr brought his army up to within nine miles of Gerona, but refused to take any share in the direction of the siege. On the 7th of July, after a July 7. heavy cannonade and many sharply-fought petty engagements, Verdier launched between two and three thousand men at one of the principal outworks, and

1809. was beaten back in three separate attacks with a loss of nearly eleven hundred killed and wounded. So greatly disheartened were his troops, who were chiefly foreigners, by this defeat, that the General would not trust them for a farther assault, but simply battered the

Aug. 11. work until, on the 11th of August, Alvarez coolly evacuated it and blew it up. Six days later, Coupigny succeeded after two failures in throwing a battalion into the beleaguered city ; but Verdier, having now secured commanding ground for his batteries, redoubled his efforts, and by the 30th of August had established four breaches in the main wall. Nevertheless during the month sickness had played havoc with the besiegers, and Verdier was not yet in a position to storm.

Meanwhile, in consequence of the constant appeals of Alvarez for help, the Supreme Junta had ordered Blake to collect such men as he could, and to advance to the relief of Gerona. Blake could raise no more than fourteen thousand troops, very many of them raw recruits, and the remainder beaten men ; but he obeyed orders and marched northward from Tortosa, though determined, after his disaster at Belchite, not to risk a pitched battle. St. Cyr, for his part, leaving fewer than seven thousand men to surround the city, concentrated the rest to meet Blake's relieving column in the hope of inflicting on it a crushing defeat. Blake,

Sept. 1. however, was not to be caught. On the 1st of September he flaunted his troops ostentatiously before St. Cyr's position as if about to attack ; but meanwhile he had in the night sent a column of four thousand men under General Garcia Conde far round the French flank towards the city. This column came upon the rear of part of the investing force, routed it completely, and led a convoy triumphantly into Gerona. St. Cyr, on discovering what had happened, at once reinforced the investing lines, and, in spite of the depletion of the covering army by this cause, advanced with the hope of bringing Blake to action. But the Spanish General prudently fell back ; and St. Cyr, having no provisions,

was unable to follow him. Garcia Conde, meanwhile, 1809. with excellent judgment, made over troops enough to complete the garrison to five thousand men, and retired with the rest and with the animals of the convoy, so as not to encumber Alvarez with more mouths than could be fed.

It cost Verdier some days and many soldiers to drive the Spaniards from the posts which they had reoccupied, and he was further delayed by a vigorous sally on the part of Alvarez; but on the 19th of September he Sept. 19. thought himself again in a position to assault, and asked St. Cyr to lend him a brigade of fresh troops to take the place of his own sickly and disheartened infantry. St. Cyr refused to do more than provide men to guard the camp while Verdier's troops were engaged in the sterner work; and the storming columns were again beaten back with the loss of over six hundred men. This failure consummated the demoralisation of the beleaguering army. Verdier returned in dudgeon to France; the rank and file succumbed by hundreds to sickness; and St. Cyr determined to waste no more lives, but to reduce the city by starvation. Food and fuel were already scarce, and the garrison cried out loudly for Blake to come to its relief. He accordingly concentrated about twelve thousand men between Gerona and the sea, and on the 26th essayed by a Sept. 26. swift and sudden movement to pass a convoy through the lines of the besiegers. The operations were ill-planned, and the attempt was foiled with heavy loss to the escorting columns.

After this success St. Cyr made a pretext for a visit to Perpignan; where, discovering that Augereau was in perfect health, he coolly resigned the command to him, and returned to Paris. Augereau came before Gerona on the 12th of October, and, finding the troops Oct. 12. greatly diminished by sickness and utterly weary of their task, continued St. Cyr's policy of blockade, varied only by fitful bombardment. Meanwhile, Blake had collected another store of victuals at

1809. Hostalrich, and on the 18th moved forward with about  
Oct. 18. ten thousand men, for the purpose, apparently, of discovering the safest point for the passage of a convoy. For a fortnight he skirmished round the French lines, baffling all Augereau's efforts to bring him to a general  
Nov. 7. action, until at last the Marshal on the 7th of November concluded the matter by sending three brigades to storm Hostalrich and destroy the magazines in the place. The task was accomplished at the trifling cost of one hundred killed and wounded, and this final failure of Blake sealed the fate of Gerona.

Alvarez, though weakened to a shadow by dysentery and fatigue, preserved always his indomitable spirit; but some of his officers were less staunch, and conspired to undermine his authority. The fact came to the knowledge of Alvarez, and he was on the point of arresting and shooting the ringleaders when  
Nov. 19. they evaded him on the 19th of November by deserting to Augereau's camp. Thanks to their information,  
Dec. 6. Augereau was able on the 6th of December to surprise two redoubts, the possession of which by the French cut off the city from its principal outlying defences. Alvarez, to recover the lost works, ordered a last sortie, which after hard fighting was disastrously repulsed; and the shock of this blow prostrated the heroic governor to unconsciousness. His successor, therefore, made overtures for a capitulation; but Augereau would grant no terms beyond simple  
Dec. 11. surrender; and on the 11th of December three thousand pallid, gaunt, dishevelled men staggered out of the city, and laid down their arms. Twelve hundred more were in hospital; and these were all that remained of the nine thousand men of the garrison. Of the inhabitants six thousand out of fourteen thousand had perished. The brave Spanish soldiers were treated with ungenerous harshness by Augereau; and Alvarez himself, after recovering his health in France, was sent back to Spain by Napoleon's orders and bandied from prison to prison. At length at Figueras he succumbed

to cruel usage and hardship, being found dead upon 1809. a barrow, the only semblance of a bed that was allowed to him in the miserable dungeon where he had been confined. The siege of this petty Catalonian fortress had cost Napoleon fourteen thousand men and nine months of time ; and it was doubtless sheer vindictiveness which prompted this mean and barbarous maltreatment of a most valiant enemy.

It may easily be imagined that the heroic defence of Gerona caused great excitement in Spain, evoking many appeals to the Supreme Junta for its relief ; and, quite apart from this, that very inefficient body was anxious to vindicate its existence by a military success. Hardly, therefore, had Wellington reached his canton- Aug. ments on the Guadiana, when the Junta began to ply both him and his brother, the British ambassador at Seville, with plans for a new offensive campaign on the Tagus ; the reason alleged for this insane proposal being an imaginary retreat of the corps of Victor, Mortier, and Soult. Wellington was at the pains to show by reasoned argument that the French were in far superior numbers to any force that the Allies could assemble against them ; but he stated to Wellesley his conviction that the Junta's action was dictated rather by " trifling political considerations " than by any prospect of military advantage. Holding these views, he declined absolutely to take part in the projected movement ; and, though the Junta returned to the charge with tempting offers of supplies and transport, and even of the command of twelve thousand Spanish troops, he remained, and rightly remained, steadfast in his determination. The one criticism which he permitted himself upon the scheme of operations was terse and decisive : " General Eguia's plan is rank nonsense."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, undeterred by these rebuffs, the Junta persisted in the resumption of the offensive. Finally they decided to withdraw two-thirds of the army of

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Wellesley, 1st Sept. ; to Castlereagh, 4th Sept. ; to Roche, 14th Sept. 1809.

1809. Estremadura to eastward, so as to amalgamate it with the remains of Venegas's army of La Mancha, for the present under the orders of Eguia; placing the rest under the Duke of Alburquerque, who had recently taken over the command of Romana's corps. Eguia's army was then to advance direct upon Madrid, while Alburquerque in company with the British, if Wellington could be persuaded to join him, was to make a demonstration about Talavera; or in other words, Eguia was to engage Victor and Sebastiani, while Alburquerque distracted Soult and Mortier. There remained the weak corps of Ney at Salamanca, and of Kellermann in the north of Leon and of Old Castile, which were to be held in check by the Army of the Left, formerly Blake's, next Romana's, and now, owing to Romana's appointment to a seat on the Supreme Junta, transferred to the Duke del Parque. In all, Eguia's force numbered about fifty thousand; Alburquerque's, after deduction of a garrison for Badajoz, about eight thousand; and del Parque's, to which reinforcements were coming from Asturias and levies from Leon, about forty thousand disposable for service in the field. These last, however, were so much scattered, from Oviedo to Ciudad Rodrigo, that it would have been imprudent to count upon the concentration of more than thirty thousand. The first of these armies was to start from La Carolina, the second from Truxillo, and the third from Ciudad Rodrigo; which is to say, that with a joint nominal strength of ninety-six thousand men, probably amounting in fact to no more than eighty thousand, bad troops under bad officers, they were to act upon external lines against an enemy not inferior numerically, and incomparably their superior in quality and direction.

Eguia had marched eastwards to join Venegas in La Mancha on the 21st of September; and, since the distance from Truxillo to the General's headquarters was about one hundred and forty miles as the crow flies, it was reasonable to suppose that his final advance

upon Madrid could hardly begin before the first 1809. week in October. But even before Eguía was upon his way, del Parque had begun to advance, and had Sept. 18. moreover called upon Beresford to help him to maintain his forward position. Wellington declining to allow the Portuguese troops to be moved to his assistance, del Parque fortunately retreated before any Sept. 23. harm had been done.<sup>1</sup> On the 5th of October, however, he advanced again with something over twenty thousand men to Tamames, at which village lay the junction of the roads from Salamanca and from the pass of Baños to Ciudad Rodrigo. Here he took up a very strong position, and decided to await attack. It seems, however, that some days elapsed before General Marchand, who was in temporary command of Ney's corps, discovered del Parque's force; for it was not until the 17th that he marched from Salamanca Oct. 17. with about thirteen thousand men, resolved, as was natural, to attack him at once. Arriving before the Spanish lines on the afternoon of the 18th, he assaulted Oct. 18. the position immediately and was repulsed with the loss of at least fourteen hundred men, being twice as many as the casualties of the Spaniards. Had not the Spanish cavalry, as usual, disgraced itself by running away early in the action, the defeat might have turned into a rout; for Marchand's retreat was so precipitate and disorderly that, according to information sent by a British officer, who was present, to Wellington, five hundred good horse would have destroyed the French army.<sup>2</sup>

This was a genuine and, so far as it went, a solid Spanish success; and del Parque, moving due north, so as at once to threaten Marchand's communications with Zamora and to meet reinforcements which were on their way to him, was heartened by the junction on

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Brigadier Cox, 25th Sept.; to Castlereagh, 29th Sept. 1809.

<sup>2</sup> Capt. Carroll to Lord Wellesley, 19th Oct. 1809. *Wellington MSS.*



1809. the 19th of General Ballesteros's<sup>1</sup> division of Asturians, Oct. 19. about a thousand of whom, being unarmed, were equipped with muskets captured from the French. Marchand for his part retired hastily to Salamanca, where he waited until he heard that del Parque had crossed the Tormes at Ledesma. He then evacuated the place, Oct. 24. abandoning a considerable quantity of stores, and fell back to Toro, so as to secure his connection with Kellermann's force at Valladolid.
- Oct. 25. On the 25th del Parque occupied Salamanca; and a day or two later the Supreme Junta, after first reporting the losses of the French to be nearly five thousand, proposed that the entire Spanish army, the British, and the Portuguese should advance and drive the enemy over the Pyrenees. Del Parque himself was so much elated that Beresford grew extremely nervous as to his future proceedings, and Wellington wrote to him earnest warning and advice; but the Spanish General fortunately retained sufficient prudence to remain halted at Salamanca, only summoning yet another division to join him from Ciudad Rodrigo.<sup>2</sup> Marchand meanwhile retired across the Douro, where, Nov. 1. on the 1st of November, Kellermann joined his army with three thousand cavalry and half that number of infantry, and took the command out of his hands. Concentrating the whole force at Tordesillas and waiting only for the arrival of a brigade from Madrid, he marched straight upon Salamanca with about twenty-three thousand men, intent upon bringing del Parque to action. The duke, however, overrating his adversary's numbers by one-half, and being, moreover, a sensible man, had no wish to fight. Obeying, therefore, a hint from Wellington, he retired southward to Bejar and the pass of Baños, whither Kellermann

<sup>1</sup> This officer always signed his name Vallesteros; but since, in Spanish, the letters B and V are interchangeable, I have adhered to the more familiar form.

<sup>2</sup> Beresford to Wellington, 31st Oct.; Wellesley to Wellington, 29th Oct. *Wellington MSS.* Wellington to Castlereagh, 31st Oct. 1809.

could not follow him without leaving Leon and Castile 1809.  
open to irruptions from the Galicians, the Asturians,  
and the guerilla-bands, which just at this time were  
extremely active. Kellermann accordingly left the  
Sixth Corps about Salamanca to observe del Parque,  
and withdrew with his own troops to his former  
position about Valladolid. It must be admitted that del  
Parque's share of the combined movements was con-  
ducted in a manner decidedly to his credit.

Far otherwise fared it with his colleague of the  
Army of the Centre. By the 3rd of October Eguia Oct. 3.  
had completed his march, and established his head-  
quarters at Daimiel, when he received information that  
twenty-five thousand French were assembling between  
Toledo and Ocaña. The report was true, for rumours  
of his eastward movement had reached Joseph's head-  
quarters and dictated a corresponding disposition of the  
French army; Mortier and the Fifth Corps ascending  
the Tagus to Toledo, while Soult's corps came down  
from Plasencia to take Mortier's place about Talavera.  
On the 4th, therefore, Eguia fell back with the whole  
army, and on the 5th fixed his headquarters at Santa Oct. 5.  
Cruz de Mudela at the foot of the Sierra Morena.  
His was no enviable position. The troops which he  
had taken over from Venegas were indeed far superior  
to those which he had brought with him from Estrema-  
dura; but everywhere were the same elements of  
weakness. The army and the people had no confidence  
in the Government; the Junta had no confidence in  
the officers; and the vilest intrigues sapped the  
strength of every department. Colonel Roche, whom  
long experience had necessarily hardened to this state  
of things, reported the condition of the army to  
Wellington with cynical indifference, and added, "As  
to Eguia's plans I know nothing—probably a general  
action with the usual result, defeat and dispersion."  
It is not, therefore, surprising that when Marshal Victor,  
having finally assembled twenty-five thousand men,  
marched on the 15th of October to Daimiel, Eguia

1809. should have fallen back still farther to La Carolina. This movement brought to a head the demoralisation of his army, for, apart from the invariable repugnance of undisciplined men to a retrograde march, the retreat signified the abandonment of a fertile district to the French, and consequent failure of supplies. Eguia, in his bitter resentment against Wellington, was striving hard to keep from him all information both as to his own movements and the enemy's; but the general discontent was such that no secret could be kept for twenty-four hours. Roche declared himself fully satisfied that the men would not fight to defend the passes of the Sierra Morena; but not a soldier from the commander-in-chief downwards had thought of a rallying-point in case these passes should be carried. In fact, the whole state of affairs in La Mancha was as bad as it could be.<sup>1</sup>

In the third week of October Eguia was superseded in command of his rabble by General Areizaga, a man of no great reputation, who had received positive orders not to move without the leave of the Supreme Junta. He was, however, bound to advance, for his army could not be fed on the mountains, nor stay there for another month without perishing from cold. "There seems," wrote Roche, "to be a kind of fate driving every Spanish General to a general action. They know of nothing between this and total inactivity." Accordingly, with the Junta's permission, Areizaga began his march from La Carolina with fifty-six thousand men, Nov. 8. and on the 8th of November encountered the van of the French cavalry at La Guardia, a little to the south-east of Ocaña.

This movement took the French by surprise. Victor, after Eguia's hasty withdrawal from Daimiel, had assumed that nothing more was to be feared from the army of La Mancha, and had distributed his troops into cantonments along a front of sixty miles from

<sup>1</sup> Roche to Wellington, 3rd, 5th; to Lord Wellesley, 17th Oct. 1809. *Wellington MSS.*

Toledo eastward to Tarancon. Soult so little expected 1809. danger that he was on the point of sending a flying-column northward to clear guerilla-bands off the line of communication. Areizaga, therefore, had little difficulty in driving back the French horse, and, had he pushed on, would have found few troops between himself and Madrid. He halted, however, for three days, during which Soult lost no time in assembling troops from all quarters. On the 12th, Areizaga moved forward his Nov. 12. cavalry to Aranjuez; but finding Sebastiani ready to defend the bridge with two divisions, and being nervous over the presence of Victor on his left flank, struck eastwards by cross-roads to the fords of Villamanrique, five-and-twenty miles up the river. Bad weather, however, delayed the passage of the stream by the army at large, though the cavalry advanced as far as Arganda, causing Soult to make dispositions for a general action in that quarter. But now Areizaga again changed his mind, and repassing the Tagus fell back upon his first line of advance. Soult hurried troops after him with all speed; and on the 19th rather Nov. 19. over thirty thousand men of the Fourth and Fifth Corps and Central Reserve closed with Areizaga's fifty thousand at Ocaña, and inflicted on them a crushing defeat. About four thousand of the Spaniards were killed and wounded, and fourteen thousand taken, besides fifty guns. The army of La Mancha for the time ceased to exist. However, the Junta thanked Areizaga and sent him a present; which was very fitting, for his incapacity in the field had very nearly eclipsed their imbecility in the closet.

The result came as no surprise to Wellington; but on the first news of Areizaga's peril the Junta had outdone itself in folly. They had ordered del Parque to move down to Talavera, and Alburquerque, who had remained in observation at Almaraz, to cross the Tagus and join him there; all for the sake of making a diversion, which could not fail to come a week too late, in Areizaga's favour. There was therefore always

1809. a chance that the situation of August might be repeated, namely, that Kellermann should cross the pass of Baños in rear of the Spaniards, while Soult's victorious army should fall on their front.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately the two Spanish commanders did not execute their orders. Alburquerque did indeed cross the Tagus, but hastily repassed it on hearing the news of Ocaña, and resumed his former position in safety.

Del Parque disobeyed from a less sensible motive. Learning that the reinforcements sent to Marchand after Tamames had been recalled to the main army, he aspired to consummate the expected victory of Areizaga by throwing himself on the line of the French retreat.

Nov. 18. He accordingly advanced on the 18th, whereupon Marchand fell back as before to Toro, sending urgent messages for reinforcements. Kellermann at once directed his colleague to Medina del Campo to guard the communication with Madrid; but del Parque's

Nov. 23. troops reached the place as soon as Marchand's, and the French retired northward upon Valladolid. On

Nov. 24. the 24th the Sixth Corps and Kellermann were assembled at Valladolid sixteen thousand strong; but on the same day del Parque received information of the disaster at Ocaña, and, turning about, fell back upon Alba de Tormes. On the 26th Kellermann sent his

Nov. 28. cavalry in pursuit, and on the 28th he came upon del Parque's army encamped near Alba de Tormes, with three divisions on one side of the river, two on the other, and all in disorder. Though his infantry was still ten miles in rear, Kellermann attacked at once with three thousand horsemen only. The first charge scattered the Spanish cavalry and one division of foot; but the second was checked by the steadiness of the remaining battalions; and, though the action did not close until the French infantry had come up and stormed Alba de Tormes, del Parque escaped with the loss of about three thousand men and nine guns.

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Bart. Frere, 19th, 26th Nov.; to Beresford, 20th Nov. 1809.

On the same night he gave orders for the retreat 1809. to be continued, apparently in several directions ; but whether from this cause, or from a false alarm in the course of the 29th, it is certain that within thirty-six Nov. 29. hours his army was dispersed. Three weeks later the defeated General sent a piteous appeal to Almeida for one hundred and fifty thousand rations of biscuit. He had rallied some twenty thousand men in the Sierra de Gata ; and, though these were again melting away fast through disease and desertion owing to scarcity of food, yet with true Spanish pride he based his request upon the possibility that his army might be called upon to make some forward movement. Wellington answered that for such a purpose he certainly would not give away an ounce of his supplies ; but that to keep a Spanish army from starvation he would relent. He added, however, that if these troops were in want of supplies so early in the winter, they would be in serious distress before the end of that season, and that the Spanish Government should look to the matter. As usual his divination was but too true. Before the middle of January, del Parque's army had lost through sickness and privation no fewer than nine thousand men.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Spanish winter campaign had gone utterly to wreck, as Wellington and every sensible man had foreseen ; and its immediate consequences were that Andalusia was thrown open to French invasion and that the fall of the Supreme Junta was made absolutely certain. It had already been decided that the Cortes should be convoked on the 1st of March 1810 ; but the distribution of constituencies and the election of representatives were matters which were still unsettled, and for which all precedents were either obsolete through long disuse, or valueless when so much of the country was in the enemy's occupation. Meanwhile, on the 1st of November, an Executive Committee had

<sup>1</sup> Brigadier Cox to Wellington, 20th Dec., *Wellington MSS.* ; Wellington to Bart. Frere, 28th Dec. 1809.

1809. taken over supreme authority in virtue of the Junta's decree of the 19th of September, and had made vigorous efforts, so far as edicts might avail, to raise men and money and to reorganise the Spanish armies. But the catastrophe of Ocaña had been too complete to be easily repaired, and the Committee had no idea how to make the most of its existing resources. Wellington had strongly advised that Alburquerque's army should be reinforced at the expense of del Parque's, and stationed in the impregnable position of Mesas de Ibor, so as to cover the passage of the Tagus at Almaraz and Arzobispo, and thus to protect the province of Estremadura. The Spanish Government, on the contrary, directed Alburquerque to fall back to the Guadiana to a position which he could not defend; whereupon the duke, of course, appealed to Wellington for assistance. The British General returned a peremptory refusal, and from that moment forward declined to be further concerned with the Spanish operations.

In truth, he had some reason to be annoyed, for, over and above all past troubles with the Spanish authorities, both civil and military, the Junta, in the teeth of Wellington's remonstrances against Areizaga's whole campaign, had given that General to understand that the British troops would co-operate with him. Wellington had long ago made up his mind to cross the Tagus, and station his army on the eastern frontier of Portugal, feeling confident that, even after their victory, the French could not venture to penetrate into Andalusia, but would endeavour to capture Ciudad Rodrigo and to establish themselves in Old Castile. He had, none the less, been reluctant to move from his cantonments about Badajoz until he had some assurance of the safety of Seville; but upon the last orders of the Executive Committee to Alburquerque he hesitated no longer. On the 9th of December the British began their march northward, and their General, three days earlier, allowed his indignation full vent in a letter to Mr. Frere. "I declare that if the Spaniards had

preserved their two armies, or even one of them, the 1809. cause was safe. The French could have sent no reinforcements which would have been of any use; time would have been gained; the state of affairs would have improved daily; all the chances were in our favour. . . . But no! nothing will answer excepting to fight great battles in the plains, in which their defeat is as certain as the commencement of the battle." By the end of December the bulk of the British army was in cantonments on the Mondego, Hill with the second division being left at Abrantes to parry any attempted invasion of Portugal by the south of the Tagus. Wellington himself remained at Badajoz until Christmas Day, and journeying by Elvas, Abrantes, Thomar, and Leiria so as to inspect the Portuguese troops, established his headquarters on the 12th of January at Vizeu.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Roche, 19th, 26th Nov.; to Frere, 26th Nov., 6th Dec.; to Beresford, 27th Nov., to Alburquerque, 27th Nov.; to Liverpool, 30th Nov., 7th Dec. 1809.



## CHAPTER XXXIV

1809. THE Spaniards, now left alone, betrayed deplorable helplessness in the disposition of their forces. Del Parque with some twenty thousand starving men remained about Ciudad Rodrigo to watch the French in Old Castile, not, however, without dreaming of offensive operations, and applying, of course in vain, for British cavalry to second them. Alburquerque's headquarters were at Don Benito on the Guadiana, a little to eastward of Merida, where he had about eight thousand troops; the remainder being taken away for the garrison of Badajoz and for an advanced detachment on the Tagus. About fifty miles east and south of Don Benito, at Almaden, was posted the first of Areizaga's detachments for the defence of the Sierra Morena, about four thousand strong. The next lay over sixty miles to south and east at La Carolina, where were Areizaga's headquarters and about thirteen thousand men, guarding the passes near the road from Madrid to Andalusia. The third post covered the easternmost defiles of Aldeaquemada and Villamanrique, the one seventeen, the other forty-five miles north and east of La Carolina, and was held by five to six thousand men. The disposition was admirably designed to enable the French to overpower any one of the detachments singly, and to force the passes with the least possible difficulty and danger to themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Soult's first impulse immediately after Ocaña was not to follow up his routed Spaniards. The enemy's

<sup>1</sup> Oman, iii. 111-112.

army, he reported, was too much dispersed to allow of 1809. effective pursuit ; and, apart from this, it was necessary to restore order in the provinces held by the French, and to re-establish the security of his communications. As usual, no sooner had the scattered garrisons of the French been withdrawn from their stations and concentrated to do duty as an army, than the population, liberated from their control, had become actively and venomously hostile. And such hostility had by this time found effective organisation, for the year 1809 was that which saw the Spanish guerilla-bands definitely formed under capable leaders for incessant petty warfare. The subject is one which may rightly detain us for a few moments.

The causes which gave birth to this movement were principally two—despair at the inefficiency of the regular armies, and vengeance for wrongs inflicted upon individuals by the French ; and the quality of the leaders varied greatly in consequence. Some were gentlemen, some of the humblest origin, more than one were priests, some were old and skilful soldiers, others took command of their fellows from natural aptitude for this particular description of operations, some were stern disciplinarians, orderly and humane, others were ferocious even to savagery. All practically pursued the same methods. A stronghold on some almost impregnable position in the mountains was chosen for a base, from which the bands sallied forth to cut up convoys, messengers, stragglers, and weak detachments of the enemy, returning instantly to their fastnesses at the first menace of danger. With such objects they naturally stationed themselves near the principal lines of the enemy's communications, and, having the whole of the people upon their side, they were of course furnished with the best of intelligence.

The most remarkable of these leaders, Martin Diez, better known as *El Empecinado*,<sup>1</sup> was the son of a common

<sup>1</sup> "Pitchy-face." He was born at Castro de Duero, where it appears that the inhabitants are of dark complexion.

1809. labourer on the upper Douro. As a trooper in the regular cavalry he had fought in the campaign of 1793 ; and had first formed his band after the rising of the 2nd of May 1808, when he at once became troublesome on the road between Valladolid and Burgos. He, then, for a short time worked with General Cuesta ; but soon left that personage in disgust to conduct operations for himself, and, joined by his three brothers, went back to his old quarters and his old work. He furnished valuable information to Moore when at Salamanca. He did no less good service in following close on the heels of Soult and Ney, when they marched through the pass of Baños upon Talavera ; and, finally, he returned once more to his old haunts at Aranda de Duero on the main road from Burgos to Madrid, where he soon became the terror of all marauding French columns. Thanks to his activity, and to that of another leader, the priest Merino, who frequented the same district, no French messenger after the first six months of 1809 could pass between Burgos or Valladolid and Madrid without a really strong escort.

Somewhat farther to the eastward was the field of operations chosen by the greatest of the guerilla chiefs, the two Minas, uncle and nephew, who worked over the district to south of Pamplona, from Logroño on the south-west almost to Jaca on the south-east ; while minor bands devoted themselves to particular portions of the road from Vitoria to Burgos, and extended themselves south-westward towards Zamora and Salamanca. Most prominent among these last was Don Julian Sanchez, who took a broader view of patriotic duty than most of his peers, and worked always in conjunction with the organised armies in the field. Beginning with a party of no more than eight or ten comrades, he presently raised a body of two hundred horse, with which he did most admirable work in watching the enemy's movements and obtaining information. As an old soldier he understood to the full the value of discipline, and thus enjoyed an ascendancy not

only over his own troops but over the peasantry at 1809. large, which vastly increased his powers of good service. Scores of his letters of intelligence to Wellington are still preserved, brief, terse, and pointed, sometimes a little exultant over a well-earned success, but maintaining always the fitting tone of an able subordinate towards an able chief.

On the more easterly line of communications, from Pamplona into Aragon, the work of harrying the French was undertaken by Renovales, one of the heroes of the second siege of Zaragoza. He had contrived to escape from his escort while marching into France, and had taken refuge in the rugged valley of the Roncal, in which he defeated a French column of six hundred men with a loss of four-fifths of their number. Two more bands under two leaders little less noted, Sarasa and Perena, worked to eastward of Renovales; the former from the stronghold of San Juan de la Peña a little to south of Jaca, the latter from the valley of the Cinca, from thirty to forty miles east of the same town. Yet farther eastward, in Catalonia, the existing organisation of the *somatenes* and *migueletes* offered abundance of excellent material to an enterprising commander. Such an one was found in Don José Manso y Sola, a miller of Barcelona. He had begun his military career with great distinction in 1808 when, at the age of twenty-three, he had already made for himself a name by cool bravery and skill. In 1809, being chosen by acclamation chief of some eight hundred peasants, he re-established himself at Vallirana, about fourteen miles west of Barcelona, from which at once he disputed the passage of the Llobregat, threatened Barcelona, and harried the French communications between that town and Tarragona. Active and enterprising, he was none the less humane, treating the vanquished with a lenity which sometimes provoked the wrath of his more ferocious companions.

Farther south, on the right bank of the Ebro, the roads leading southward from Zaragoza were threatened

1809. by the band of Don Pedro Villacampa, a distinguished officer of high rank who, in consequence of wrangles between different aspirants to the command, had been appointed by General Blake to supersede all others. His stronghold, when threatened by overwhelming force, was at Muela de San Juan in the heart of the Sierra de Albarracin, over eighty miles south of Zaragoza. To west and yet farther to south, in Toledo and La Mancha, Mir and Jiménez were the most prominent leaders; while between Madrid and Talavera one Camilo, a prosperous husbandman whose wife and daughters had been outraged by the French, collected a party of followers to take vengeance, and spared no soldier of the enemy who fell into his hands.

It must not be supposed that the guerilla-bands were mere skulkers, who contented themselves only with the destruction of the French by ones and twos from some point of vantage. They never made an attack, it is true, unless the odds were enormously in their favour; but that was the essence of their real function, and it is to their credit rather than the contrary that they were faithful to this principle. Nevertheless, they would undertake operations which, considering the strength of their forces, were considerable in scale; and they struck with true instinct at strategic points. Thus Sarasa surprised the garrison of Sanguesa, and Mina that of Tudela, on the main roads from Pamplona to Zaragoza; and, though, of course, they were unable to hold these places, the French commanders were none the less obliged to send a superior force to drive them out. Before long the guerilla-bands were to become formidable enough to capture whole French battalions, and already they were constantly picking up French prisoners by fifty and sixty at a time. In truth, if the Spaniards had been at liberty to dictate the methods which they would choose their enemy to pursue, they could have found none more advantageous to themselves than Napoleon's practice of living on the country and of making war support war. How many unfortunate

French soldiers were sacrificed to this system will probably never be known. If a man does not feed his dog, he must not be surprised if the animal becomes a sheep-killer, with every man's hand against him. Yet the French commanders had left their troops to feed themselves ever since the Revolution, and a starving man differs little from a hungry dog. The Spanish peasants from the first had not been slow to stab and to cut throats; and now, with armed parties of their countrymen everywhere within reach to back them, they became bolder to attack and more cunning to entrap their victims. A single guerilla chief, a Franciscan friar who had been roused to vengeance by the execution of his father for fidelity to King Ferdinand, reported at the end of 1809 that he had done six hundred Frenchmen to death.<sup>1</sup>

With enemies so numerous and so formidable in his rear, it is not surprising that Soult at first doubted the expediency of following up the vanquished of Ocaña. It should seem that his hesitation was due in part to a false report that the British army had advanced to Truxillo; for, within a few days after he had assured himself of Wellington's retreat into Portugal, he resolved to continue his advance into Andalusia. It is not, perhaps, difficult to account for his change of mind. It is true that a few short months earlier he had urged that Lisbon, as the base of the British army, was the real objective for the French force rather than Seville as the seat of the Junta or of the Cortes. But King Joseph was naturally anxious to banish a rival government, and to master the richest and most populous province in Spain. Reinforcements were beginning to stream over the Pyrenees, and it was expected that the Emperor would follow them in person. There would, therefore, be plenty of troops to restore order on the lines of communication; and it might well suit the private convenience both of Joseph and Soult to subdue Andalusia and to obtain possession of its wealthy cities,

<sup>1</sup> For the preceding paragraphs see *Arteche*, vii. chap. i.

1809. before their jealous and imperious master should come upon the scene. Napoleon never trusted his subordinates, and they never trusted him. They spent a great deal of time in writing lies to each other, which probably were believed by neither party; consequently, in any matter of doubt, each, as a rule, chose the line which best favoured his individual interest.<sup>1</sup>

Preparations for the advance, therefore, went forward during the first weeks in December; and on the 14th Soult wrote that circumstances had never been so propitious for an invasion of Andalusia, and that he awaited only the Emperor's signification of his pleasure.

Dec. 19. Five days later Joseph likewise addressed his brother in a feeble imitation of Napoleon's style. "The government of Seville is at the last gasp; the hour is upon us; and I mean to profit by it." But no

1810. answer came; and on the 1st of January Soult

Jan. 1. announced that, after a month's waiting in vain for the Emperor's orders, Joseph was about to set his troops

Jan. 7. in motion. On the 7th the King left Madrid for the south, and on the 11th fixed his headquarters at Almagro. Here, after consultation with Victor, it was agreed that the army should attack the Sierra Morena in two columns. The right or western column, consisting of the First Corps, about twenty thousand men, under Victor, was to move some seventy miles westward to Almaden, cross the Sierra Morena by that rugged pass, with or without its artillery, and thence strike due south upon Cordova. Meanwhile, the left column would attack Areizaga's positions in front and, it was hoped, would drive his army into Victor's arms.

Jan. 12. Victor marched, accordingly, on the 12th; and Joseph, after allowing six days for him to make his long turning movement, resumed his advance on the 18th with forty

Jan. 20. thousand men. On the 20th he delivered an attack by four columns simultaneously upon the passes of

<sup>1</sup> Soult to Clarke, 21st Nov., 8th Dec.; Joseph to Napoleon, 3rd Dec.; Napoleon to Berthier, 9th Dec. 1809.

Villamanrique, Despeña Perros, and two others farther 1810.  
to the eastward. Though, by spreading his troops  
along a front of some forty miles, Joseph had emulated  
the mistake of Areizaga, the assault was perfectly suc-  
cessful. The passes were carried with trifling loss to  
the assailants, and one Spanish division of four thousand  
men was captured ; though the main body, by retreating  
due south upon Jaen, did not fall, as had been hoped,  
into the hands of Victor. Sebastiani was then detached  
with ten thousand men to Jaen, while Joseph and Soult  
pursued their way by Andujar upon Cordova. In Jaen,  
Sebastiani on the 23rd came upon Areizaga with some Jan. 23.  
eight thousand men which remained of the wreck of  
his army ; but these demoralised troops offered little or  
no resistance, and the town threw open its gates. On  
the 22nd Joseph regained touch with Victor at Andujar,  
and on the 24th the First Corps entered Cordova, Jan. 24.  
which surrendered without any attempt at defence.  
All, in fact, had gone perfectly well for the French  
arms ; and the Spanish army of La Mancha had practi-  
cally ceased to exist.

Accordingly, at Andujar on the 25th, Joseph and Soult Jan. 25.  
laid their plans for the future. Sebastiani was sent  
with ten thousand men to Granada ; Dessolles with the  
reserve of six to seven thousand men was left to guard  
the communications ; Reynier with the Second Corps,  
who had been stationed about Almaraz, was directed to  
extend his troops south-westward to Truxillo and to  
push out parties to watch the valley of the Tagus ;  
while Joseph with the First and Fifth Corps, numbering  
together about thirty-two thousand men, marched  
straight upon Seville. On the 27th Joseph wrote from Jan. 27.  
Cordova to Napoleon that the pacification of Andalusia  
would soon be accomplished. "All the towns are  
sending me deputations ; Seville is following this ex-  
ample. The Junta has retired to the Isle of Leon.  
I am about to enter Cadiz without firing a shot."  
The statements concerning Seville and Cadiz were not  
true, but Joseph had a better excuse than usual for.



1810. dressing expectations in the guise of facts, for it really seemed likely that his hopes would be fulfilled.

Jan. 29. On the 29th Victor's advanced horsemen came before the walls of Seville, and were received with musket shots at every point. There was, however, little to be apprehended in the way of resistance, for the city was given over to panic and disorder. The Junta, which for months past had been so unpopular as to provoke conspiracies for its overthrow, had tried to reassure the population, on the first news of Joseph's proximity, by sending wild and impracticable orders to del Parque and Alburquerque to fall on the flank and rear of the French. This foolish farce deceived none. On the 22nd riots began, and the members of the Junta began to slink away, ostensibly for the purpose of preparing for the Cortes which had been appointed to assemble on the 1st of February at Cadiz. By the evening of the 23rd all were gone, and the Central Junta had passed away for ever. The mob then appointed a new Junta of five, including Romana, Eguia, and two of the leading conspirators against the late Junta. This usurping body issued decrees and nominated leaders with great vigour, but to no purpose except to supersede del Parque by Romana, who, like a wise man, at once rode off to Castile to take command of his army. The remaining members then found themselves face to face with the problem of organising the defence of Seville. The mob, with its usual unthinking energy, had thrown up earth-works on a vast scale, without an idea as to where troops should be found to man them. The new Junta had counted upon Alburquerque, but there was no sign of his coming; and without his force there were only from three to four thousand regular soldiers at their disposal. On the 28th the members of the new Junta dispersed with the same alacrity as their predecessors, leaving Seville in the charge of the populace.

The result was not difficult to foresee. There was at first tremendous firing on the French vedettes, till on Jan. 31. the 30th and 31st the rest of the French army came up;

but on the evening of the latter day the corporation of 1810. Seville sent out emissaries to negotiate for a surrender, while the regular troops in the city retreated hastily to the westward during the parley. Joseph, burning to pose as a benevolent conqueror, joyfully accepted the terms proposed to him, and on the 1st of February Feb. 1. rode triumphant into Seville. He was received with a warmth which was not ungenune, the people having had more than enough of inefficient Juntas; and he gave vent to his exultation by issuing a singularly ridiculous parody of his great brother's bulletins. However, he had some cause to be satisfied, for in Seville he took not only the chief arsenal of Spain, with all appliances in admirable order, but vast quantities of tobacco, quicksilver, and other monopolies of the Spanish Government, and even some gold and silver from the mines of South America. In fact, he had at last found what he had hitherto sought in vain in his new kingdom, some approach to a popular welcome and a small store of ready money.

None the less had Joseph been guilty of a great and fatal military blunder. Alburquerque, whose nine thousand men were quartered about Medellin, had, as we have seen, received impracticable orders from the Central Junta as to his operations. Ignoring these, he marched straight upon Seville, and on the 23rd of January reached the Guadalquivir, about fifteen miles north of the town, where fresh commands reached him to march on Cordova. Accordingly, crossing the river he turned south-eastward upon Carmona, where he was joined by about two thousand troops which had retreated from the Sierra Morena. From thence he pushed out patrols to eastward, which came into contact with Victor's cavalry, and reported truly that the French were advancing in great force. Having already intelligence of the flight of the Central Junta, Alburquerque hesitated no longer, but resolved to hasten direct to Cadiz, which, as he was aware, possessed no garrison. His movements were no secret. Soult

1810. knew on the 23rd of January that Albuquerque's army had been summoned to Seville; he knew on the 28th that it was in front of Victor, not far from Carmona, and by report eighteen to twenty thousand strong; he knew certainly on the 31st—most probably, indeed, on the 30th—that this same army was heading for Cadiz;<sup>1</sup> he could hardly have been ignorant that Cadiz, impregnable in those days if sufficiently garrisoned, was at the moment unguarded. Yet he deliberately allowed Albuquerque to go on his way, sending no more than a brigade of cavalry to watch him.

The story is a strange one, and all the stranger seeing that Soult judged Albuquerque's army to be nearly twice as strong as it really was. Several authorities agree that Joseph, in the course of his stay at Carmona on the 30th and 31st, brought up the question of marching straight upon Cadiz instead of upon Seville, and that he was silenced by Soult with the words, "If any one will answer to me for Seville, I will answer for Cadiz."<sup>2</sup> The Marshal and not the King, therefore, must take the responsibility for the error of neglecting this force; and it should seem that he was soon touched by misgivings, for on the 2nd of February he despatched Victor's corps to pursue Albuquerque and occupy Cadiz. On the 8th Joseph wrote airily that he hoped that the city would open her gates,<sup>3</sup> but he was doomed to disappointment. Victor, with sound instinct, quickened his march; but, when he Feb. 5. came before the place on the evening of the 5th, he found the only bridge of access broken down, and batteries erected on all commanding points. Albuquerque, who had started at least four days earlier, had arrived only two days before the French. From beginning to end of the march his cavalry had been constantly engaged against the enemy, only with the

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. du Roi Joseph*, vii. 235, 246-247.

<sup>2</sup> These authorities are quoted by Mr. Oman, iii. 135 n.

<sup>3</sup> To Napoleon, 8th Feb. 1810.

greatest difficulty covering the retreat of the infantry ; <sup>1810.</sup> and his troops generally, being denied food and forage by their countrymen both at Xeres and at Santa Maria, had dragged themselves into Cadiz utterly exhausted.<sup>1</sup> Had they been followed by no more than a division instead of a brigade of French cavalry, it seems highly probable that they might have been dispersed. Now, however, they had not only arrived safely, but had brought with them some half-formed battalions, which were in process of organisation at various points on the road ; and the most famous port of Spain was no longer to be taken without a siege in form.

It is difficult to exaggerate the good service rendered by Alburquerque in thus marching upon his own responsibility to Cadiz. Joseph's original invasion of Andalusia had been, if not certainly a mistake, at all events of extremely doubtful policy. Even upon the first news of Ocaña Wellington questioned whether the movement would be practicable, and four weeks later he expressed himself with yet greater decision. "The first effort of the enemy, when he shall receive his reinforcements, must be to possess himself of the course of the Tagus, and he can never venture to push himself into the south of Spain until that object shall be accomplished."<sup>2</sup> On the 31st of January he was still of opinion that the operation was hazardous, and on the same day Napoleon at last spoke out his mind upon the invasion of Andalusia, and expressed his dissatisfaction with it. "The English," he wrote, "are the only danger in Spain. The rest are only partisans who can never keep the field." This was sound truth, and there had been a time when Soult was as fully alive to it as the Emperor. But he had taken the risk of ignoring the British army, and, even while Napoleon was writing, he had taken the further risk of ignoring Alburquerque's army also. Fortune rarely permits two

<sup>1</sup> Arteche, viii. appendix 2.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Beresford, 27th Nov. ; to Lt.-Col. Roche, 19th Dec. 1809.

1810. consecutive fundamental blunders to go unpunished. Henceforward the operations of the French were permanently distracted and weakened by the detention before Cadiz of a considerable force, which could not without peril be withdrawn. "The slightest retrograde movement of any corps in the Andalusian expedition," wrote Napoleon in the letter already quoted, "will be contrary to all military ideas, will embolden the insurrection, and will discourage the French Army." The saying was true, not of Andalusia only but of the whole of Spain, and sums up in itself the reasons for the fall of Napoleon's empire.

The city of Cadiz is by nature one of the most inaccessible that is to be found in the world to a hostile force advancing by land only. It lies at the extreme tip of a long sandy spit, which runs out for a length of five miles to the north from the island of Leon, and in many places does not exceed two hundred yards in breadth. The defences of the spit, which I shall call the isthmus of Cadiz, were an entrenchment called the battery of San Fernando, extending from sea to sea some two miles south of the town; and the outer bulwarks were pushed far out to southward of Cadiz itself. The island of Leon, which is of irregular shape, measures in extreme length from north-east to south-west about seven miles, and in extreme width from east to west about four miles. It is cut off from the mainland by a channel of salt water, called the Rio de Santi Petri, which varies in width from eighty to one hundred and fifty yards, and is bordered by salt marshes. The only passage over these obstacles was by a single bridge opposite nearly the broadest part of the island, named the Ponte Zuazo, and this had been broken down by Alburquerque upon his arrival. General Venegas, the military governor, had removed all boats which might be serviceable to an enemy; but, over and above this precaution, batteries had been thrown up along the whole length of the channel, and there was a swarm of gunboats to hand, which would have made any attempt

at a passage in small craft something worse than 1810. hazardous. So far, therefore, as access by the island of Leon was concerned, Victor was unable to approach even within seven or eight miles of Cadiz.

There is, however, another sandy peninsula, called the Trocadero, immediately to north of the island of Leon, which forms, together with the isthmus already mentioned, the gate of the inner harbour. At the narrowest point in the channel between the two the water is less than a mile broad ; and the passage was defended by the forts of Puntales on the western side, and of Matagorda and San Luis upon the Trocadero. From Matagorda, Puntales lay within a range of thirteen hundred yards, and the southern defences of Cadiz within a range of something under four thousand yards, the latter distance being too great for effective fire from any artillery then existing. The approach to the Trocadero from the land, however, was by no means so thoroughly protected as that to the Isle de Leon ; and, accordingly, Venegas had blown up the whole of the works upon that peninsula, leaving the French to reconstruct them, if they dared, under the fire of Fort Puntales and of the joint fleets of Spain and England.

Victor, having sent into Cadiz a summons, which was defiantly rejected, and taken stock of the fortifications, sat down and reported that without boats and heavy artillery he could do nothing. Joseph came up to inspect the city in person on the 18th, and informed his Feb. 18. brother that Cadiz showed symptoms of defending itself. "But," added this hardened warrior, "we shall see in a day or two what she will do when we have raised a few batteries. If Your Majesty could spare the Toulon fleet, it might be usefully employed here."<sup>1</sup> Herein Joseph spoke the truth. Naval assistance was essential to the capture of Cadiz, but, unfortunately, naval supremacy lay on the side of the British ; and the last experience of the Toulon fleet, which had cheered the weary heart of the dying Collingwood, did not

<sup>1</sup> Joseph to Napoleon, 18th Feb. 1810.

1810. promise that it should be easily wrested from them. Victor might cover the approach to the city by land, but the sea lay open, and already advantage had been taken of it. The small corps of regular troops, which had slipped out of Seville after the surrender of that town, had first retreated to Ayamonte, and had then taken ship and returned to Cadiz. Moreover, on the 30th of January the Spanish Government, forgetting former scruples in its panic, had begged through Mr. Frere for aid from the British, and Wellington had immediately
- Jan. 31. complied. It so happened that on the 31st of January Major-General William Stewart had arrived from Portsmouth with the Seventy-ninth, Ninety-fourth, and drafts; and these two battalions, together with the second battalion of the Eighty-seventh and two companies of artillery, were selected, with Stewart for their commander, for employment at Cadiz. The Portuguese Regency a few days later offered a Portuguese regiment, thirteen hundred strong, for the same service, which was likewise embarked; and thus a force of between three and four thousand men was subtracted from the defensive army of Portugal. Wellington made no conditions as to their service, except that on points of discipline they should be subject to their own officers only, that they should not be detached from Cadiz, and that they should receive British rations from the Spanish stores. These terms were accepted by the Regency with perfect contentment, and by the 14th of February Frere was able to report that their commander had gained the esteem and good-will of all in the city.<sup>1</sup> Thus it was that the redcoats were already visible in Matagorda and in Albuquerque's new earthworks when Joseph came before the isle of Leon.

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese regiment reached Cadiz on the 17th of February. The British 2/88th seems to have arrived from Gibraltar about the same time. Stewart and his troops arrived on the 11th of February. *Wellington MSS.*, Stewart to Wellington, 31st Jan.; Frere to Wellington, 14th Feb.; Villiers to Wellington, 5th Feb. 1810. The Seventy-ninth were from 900 to 1000 strong; the Ninety-fourth were 670.

Nevertheless Cadiz had a very weak point in that 1810. the authority of the Spanish Regency was disputed by the local Junta, a pretentious and unpatriotic body, which, by aspiring to powers which it was incompetent to wield, and neglecting the simpler duties that it might usefully have performed, was laying up material for bitter and dangerous division in the future. It may possibly have been the knowledge of the friction between Junta and Regency which prompted Joseph to send secret emissaries to every man of high station in Cadiz, exhorting them to throw themselves upon his clemency. His overtures being everywhere rejected with contumely, he decided at last to make a royal progress through his newly won kingdom of Andalusia. It was indeed but little exaggeration to call it his kingdom. Sebastiani, after dispersing such demoralised bodies of Spaniards as attempted to arrest him, received the surrender of Granada on the 29th of January, and marching thence south-westward stormed and sacked Malaga with little trouble or loss. He then distributed his troops along the coast, there being nothing further to oppose him except guerilla-bands; for the remnants of the Spanish armies had all taken refuge in Murcia. Joseph therefore visited Ronda, Malaga, Granada, Jaen, and Cordova, receiving deputations, reviewing civic guards, and lavishing smiles and promises. His reception was sufficiently hearty to encourage him to believe in his own popularity; indeed, it should seem that the Andalusians were really less hostile to him than many of their compatriots, and that not a few were sincerely friendly. The intrusive King lacked neither intelligence nor tact. He displayed interest, which need not have been feigned, in the historical antiquities of every city through which he passed; he was gracious, accessible, and kindly; in fact he delighted to appear in the character of a benevolent despot, and it is quite possible that, in happier circumstances, he might have filled such a position worthily.

Such a policy was, however, diametrically opposed



1810. to that which Napoleon had ordained for him. The Emperor, to uphold his sovereignty in France and in Europe, was obliged to maintain a far larger army than he could afford to pay ; and he was resolute that Joseph should, from his Spanish revenues, discharge the bulk of the expenses of the army in Spain. "Levy contributions," was his constant injunction, which was implicitly obeyed by his generals ; Sebastiani and Soult being little less alert as extortioners than three other generals who were an abomination to Joseph. "In the name of French blood and Spanish blood, Sire," wrote the unhappy King, "recall Loison, Kellermann, and Thouvenot. These men cost us very dear." Yet almost at the same moment Napoleon was holding up Loison to other generals as a pattern. "Write to General Solignac that Loison has done well in levying a contribution of a million and a half of reals," was his instruction to Berthier ; "but," he added, "this money must all be paid into the military chest."<sup>1</sup> This last order was one which had never been very religiously observed by French generals since the Revolution. The situation, indeed, presented some aspects that were intensely ludicrous. On one side, Joseph, the titular King, was endeavouring to raise revenue to satisfy his brother's demands ; on the other, the French generals were intercepting all income, with Napoleon's approval, by arbitrary seizures ; and, finally, great part of the proceeds were paid neither to Joseph nor to Napoleon, but simply poured into the generals' pockets for their private emolument.

By the beginning of 1810 Napoleon's patience with his brother's squeamishness in the matter of exaction  
Jan. 28. was worn out, and on the 28th of January he delivered his final decision. He himself would in future furnish only £80,000 a month towards the expenses of the army in Spain, and the whole of the balance must be supplied by Joseph ; otherwise, there was only one

<sup>1</sup> Joseph to Napoleon, 25th Jan.; Napoleon to Berthier, 27th Jan. 1810.

thing to be done—the Spanish provinces must be administered in the interests of France. The threat was executed almost as soon as written. Within eleven days an imperial decree distributed the provinces of Spain into four military governments, and appointed as many military governors to rule over them; namely, Augereau, or the commandant of the Seventh Corps, to Catalonia, Suchet to Aragon, General Dufour to Navarre, and General Thouvenot to Biscay. It was expressly ordered that no one of the three last provinces should receive any further funds from France for the payment of troops, and that the governors of all four should correspond direct with Berthier upon all military subjects, acting upon no commands except from him as to civil administration. Further, Marshal Ney and Generals Bonnet, Thiébault and Kellermann were directed to collect the revenues of the provinces of Salamanca, Toro, and Zamora; of Santander and Asturias; of Burgos; and of Valladolid and Palencia respectively; and they likewise were to correspond with Berthier upon all financial details. Practically this decree deprived Joseph of any authority, civil or military, over all but a very small portion of Spain; and it was certainly intended to do so. Not many days after the date of this decree, Napoleon sent explicit commands to Suchet that no attention was to be paid to directions from Madrid, if they should clash with those from Paris, and to Augereau that he was to accept no orders from any one except the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

It may be said that these decrees and orders of Napoleon only confirmed the existing state of affairs; for, while the Emperor was dictating them, Joseph on his side was complaining that the generals were already raising taxes, issuing proclamations, and promulgating laws in a fashion which brought him into contempt with his new subjects.<sup>2</sup> But this cannot lessen our

<sup>1</sup> Decree of 8th Feb. 1810 in *Mém. du Roi Joseph*, viii. 439; Napoleon to Berthier, 17th Feb.; to Clarke, 21st Feb. 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph to Napoleon, 18th Feb. 1810.

1810. amazement that so great a man as Napoleon, after deliberately countenancing insubordination, should still have expected matters to proceed well and smoothly in Spain, with half a dozen generals each going his own way, and no commander-in-chief to control them. It is true that after the conclusion of peace with Austria he had announced that he should take personal command in the Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Late in November 1809, he had appointed Berthier to be Chief of the Staff of the army in Spain, and had dictated measures which would enable himself to take the reins immediately into his own hands. There is more than one allusion in his correspondence during December to his arrival in Spain; on the 11th of January 1810 he gave directions for sending some of his horses over the frontier, and on the 12th of February he bade Berthier spread a report in Portugal that the Emperor was coming with eighty thousand men.<sup>2</sup> This last, however, was almost certainly a blind, for, having divorced Josephine in December, he was by the second week of February on the eve of signing his marriage contract with the Archduchess Marie Louise. Whatever might be the calls of Spain upon him, he could not respond to them while so weighty a business was in hand; and after the 2nd of April he was entitled to say that he had married a wife and therefore he could not come. Possibly he thought that the matrimonial alliance in itself was a stroke which would dismay his enemies; and he was so far right that Wellington described it in all seriousness as a terrible thing. But the decree of the 8th of February was only the beginning of his insane policy of divided rule in Spain, and the inference to be drawn from it is inevitable. The Emperor was already succumbing to the defect which eventually brought him to ruin, namely, a tendency to confound assumptions with facts. He assumed that he could direct operations in

<sup>1</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 16, 132.

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon to Berthier, 28th Nov. 1809; 11th Jan., 12th Feb. 1810.

Spain as well from Paris as on the spot, and that there-<sup>1810.</sup> fore they were bound to succeed. Probably, such is poor human nature, he derived considerable satisfaction from annoying Joseph, who was by no means in favour with him at the time.

Joseph received the news of his degradation at Malaga, and answered it on the 2nd of March with a<sup>March 2.</sup> piteous but helpless protest. To his wife he wrote that unless the Emperor changed his conduct he should resign, a threat which he repeated more than once in the course of the year, but never fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor continued to heap petty vexations upon him. Together with the decree he sent Joseph a furious letter of reproach for not being at Salamanca and Valladolid to menace Portugal and prevent the English from making a descent upon France, although the miserable King had for months been asking in vain for instructions. A few weeks later, to anticipate this detail of the narrative, Napoleon interposed to prevent his brother from sharing in the proceeds of English goods confiscated in Andalusia. "He is only the commander of my army," he wrote, with seemingly unconscious irony. In April he entrusted Massena with independent command of the Second, Sixth, and Eighth Corps, as the army of Portugal. In July he gave Soult independent command of the First, Fourth, and Fifth Corps as the army of Andalusia. Not till October did he grant to Joseph himself an army of the Centre. The generals, of course, took their cue from their master. Ney made a military incursion into the province of Avila, which was within Joseph's district, and laid violent hands upon the public money collected by the King's receiver. Kellermann forbade Joseph's underlings in the provinces to correspond with their superior at Madrid. Soult ordered Joseph's troops from La Mancha to Andalusia and Joseph ordered them back; after which both represented to the Emperor

<sup>1</sup> Joseph to Napoleon, 2nd March; to his wife, 12th April, 16th July, 8th, 21st Aug. 1810.

1810. that this kind of thing could not continue. Everywhere there was friction, and everywhere downright roguery in the malversation of the funds collected for the army.<sup>1</sup>

Such, made and in the making, was the condition of the higher command of the French troops in Spain when Napoleon girded himself for his great effort in 1810. We have now to consider the reinforcements by means of which he hoped to achieve the final conquest of the Peninsula. Early in October 1809, when peace with Austria was on the point of being concluded, he laid his plans to place one hundred thousand men between Orleans and Bayonne in December, ready to cross the Pyrenees. He intended that nearly half of this number should be supplied by depots, provisional corps, and other unorganised units, and four thousand men more by foreign corps, so as to leave the army of Germany practically untouched; and he compassed this object with singular success. From Germany he took only a corps of reserve, called the Eighth Corps, which he eked out with a few battalions from Paris, and turned over bodily to the Peninsula with the same title as before. Together with its cavalry, which was composed of thirty-two depot-squadrons of sixteen regiments of dragoons, and about sixteen hundred artillery, the Eighth Corps numbered thirty-seven thousand of all ranks, of which about thirty-three thousand were effective. The troops next in importance to the Eighth Corps were the Young Guard, consisting of eight battalions of infantry, three provisional regiments of cavalry, and artillery, with an effective total of sixteen to seventeen thousand men. Besides these, there was a great number of drafts, and of fourth battalions of the regiments serving in Spain, some of which last were sooner or later joined

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 10th Feb. (Lecestre, ii. 10.); to Berthier, 17th April; Decree of 17th April; to Soult, 14th July; to Berthier, 29th Sept., 4th Oct.; Joseph to Napoleon, 30th April; to Napoleon and Berthier, 25th Aug.; to Napoleon, 31st Aug.; Soult to Berthier, 18th, 29th Aug.; Circular of Berthier, 15th Sept. 1810.

to their own corps, while others remained isolated. 1810. There were further a few thousand foreign troops, and four thousand gendarmerie to patrol the main lines of communication. But as Napoleon looked more closely into the work of the guerillas and realised how enormously they complicated his task, he added to the foregoing a reserve, made up of more fourth battalions, which was called the Ninth Corps, and was assigned to General Drouet. Altogether the full total of the reinforcements poured into Spain by September 1810 was one hundred and thirty-eight thousand men. Of these by far the greater number had crossed the frontier by May; and about sixty thousand, comprising the Eighth Corps and Young Guard, were actually in Spain by the middle of January, with nearly forty thousand more at Bayonne or elsewhere close to the frontier. Including these last the French army of Spain at the beginning of February counted two hundred and ninety-seven thousand men.

The distribution of these corps was as follows.<sup>1</sup> The First, Fifth, and part of the Fourth Corps were, as we have seen, fully employed in Andalusia. The Second Corps was in the valley of the Tagus about Talavera, protecting the rear of the army of Andalusia and observing the frontier of Portugal. The Sixth Corps was likewise watching the frontier of Portugal farther north, with its headquarters at Salamanca. The Eighth Corps was about Burgos, having only just entered Spain. The Third Corps formed the army of

<sup>1</sup> It may be convenient to enumerate again the French army corps and their commanders:—

1st Corps: Marshal Victor, Duke of Belluno.

2nd Corps: General Heudelet, presently succeeded by Reynier.

3rd Corps: General Suchet.

4th Corps: General Sebastiani.

5th Corps: Marshal Mortier, Duke of Treviso.

6th Corps: Marshal Ney, Duke of Elchingen.

7th Corps: Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione; presently succeeded by Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarento.

8th Corps: Marshal Junot, Duke of Abrantes.

9th Corps: General Drouet.

1810. Aragon, and was stationed chiefly about the Lower Ebro ; and the Seventh composed the army of Catalonia. Besides these there were about eight thousand men in the garrisons of Navarre ; fifteen thousand in the garrisons of Biscay ; five thousand in the provinces of Valladolid and Palencia ; nearly as many in Segovia ;<sup>1</sup> about twelve thousand in Madrid<sup>2</sup> and New Castile ; and seven thousand, exclusive of the two divisions of the Young Guard, in Santander. Since the First, Fourth, and Fifth Corps under Soult, and the Second, Sixth, and Eighth under Massena were the two armies—the one of Andalusia and the other of Portugal—with which the British were to be chiefly concerned, it will be convenient to clear the ground by relating first the operations of the rest.

To begin, then, with the isolated sphere of Catalonia, it must be remembered that the year 1809 had closed with the fall of Gerona, which had swept away the most dangerous obstacle on the road between the French frontier and Barcelona, and had liberated Augereau's army for service in the field. The Marshal's muster-rolls in January showed a nominal total of fifty-one thousand men, including a batch of six thousand drafts at Perpignan ; but in Verdier's division alone seven thousand out of thirteen thousand men were on the sick-list, and the full total of effective combatants fell below thirty-five thousand. Of these, again, nearly six thousand under General Duhesme were in Barcelona, strictly blockaded by the British frigates at sea, almost as straitly confined by guerillas ashore, and therefore always half-starved. Napoleon's orders to Augereau were that he should advance to Barcelona at once, in order to raise the blockade, revictual the city, and make the presence of his army felt. This done, he was to assure safe communication between Barcelona and France by taking the castle of Hostalrich, which, though not so formidable an

<sup>1</sup> Including Laval's division of the 4th Corps.

<sup>2</sup> Including the 1st division of the 4th Corps.

obstruction as Gerona, was an eternal menace to the safety of the main road.<sup>1</sup> 1810.

To bring a convoy into Barcelona was, as the Marshal knew, no very easy task ; wherefore, to simplify it, he began by setting several columns in motion against the *somatenes* of the mountains about Gerona, in the hope of dispersing if not of exterminating them. As was to be expected from such a man, he tried to overcome all difficulties by violence, treating the Spanish irregulars as mere banditti, and hanging such as he caught without trial and without mercy, a policy which did not fail to provoke savage reprisals from his enemies. These preliminaries completed, he sent Souham's division and two Italian brigades along the western road, which leads by way of Vich upon Barcelona, to clear his right flank ; ordered Mazzuchelli's Italian brigade to advance upon Hostalrich ; and summoned Duhesme to meet him, with such troops as he could spare, at Granollers, where the two roads meet about twenty miles north of Barcelona. The only regular force which he had to dread was the remnant of the Spanish army of Catalonia, about seven thousand raw and discouraged men, but now under a young and active commander, Henry O'Donnell. Upon reaching Vich on the 12th of January Souham found that this body had just withdrawn before him into the mountains, whereupon he pressed on in pursuit of it with an advanced guard only. O'Donnell continued his retreat for a time until, on reaching an advantageous position, he suddenly faced about and handled Souham's small column so roughly that the latter was fain to fall back on the main body with the loss of over three hundred killed, wounded, and prisoners. O'Donnell, however, was too prudent to await an attack of the French in strength, and retired after this success towards Manresa ; whereupon Souham likewise retreated to Vich, from which place two days later he was directed to detach his two Italian brigades to Augereau. Jan. 12. Jan. 14. Jan. 16.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 19th Dec. 1809.



1810. Mazzuchelli, in the meanwhile, had come before Hostalrich on the 13th and had detailed an Italian brigade to invest it ; but, finding the place determined upon resistance, he summoned two more brigades from
- Jan. 18. Souham, and on the 18th assaulted and carried the town with little difficulty. Thinking that the garrison of the castle would be overawed by this success, Augereau
- Jan. 21. on the 21st addressed an insolent summons to the garrison, which was defiantly rejected. The French Marshals at this period appear to have thought it discourteous, if not immoral, for any hostile fortress to defend itself, and Augereau was no exception to the rule. Beside himself with rage, he sent for heavy guns from Gerona, and, leaving the besieging force behind him, continued his march with his convoy and some nine thousand men upon Granollers. He had not proceeded far when he was met by bad news. Duhesme, obedient to orders, had on the 16th marched out to Granollers with about two thousand men, of whom two hundred and fifty were cavalry ; but, after waiting four days, had been recalled to Barcelona by an alarm of an attack from the south. He had therefore turned over the command to Colonel Guétry, who, in order to shelter the men from the bitter cold, had cantoned them in three different villages some miles apart. O'Donnell, hearing of this, and learning further that Augereau was still twenty miles away from them, sent four thousand men by a forced march across the mountains ; who fell upon the scattered French parties at dawn of the 21st. The surprise was complete. One battalion was cut off almost to a man ; another, together with the cavalry, escaped to Barcelona, much maltreated ; and the third only saved itself by holding a fortified convent at Granollers, from which it was released after two days' siege by the advance of Augereau. This affair cost the French a thousand men ; and the blame for the mishap must fall upon Augereau himself for keeping so small a detachment so long exposed in isolation. Moreover, since the

Spaniards retired immediately upon his coming, he had 1810.  
no opportunity of avenging the insult.

On the 24th the Marshal entered Barcelona, where Jan. 24.  
he was joined by Souham's division ; stopped there for one week, during which he deprived Duhesme of his command and sent him back to France ; and on the 1st of February marched out again. He could not, Feb. 1.  
in fact, have waited longer without consuming the greater part of the supplies that he had brought with him. His troops, therefore, returned to their former stations, Souham to Vich with his French division of five thousand men, Pino and his Italians to Hostalrich, while the Marshal betook himself to Gerona to await the assembling of yet another convoy. The isolation of Souham was not lost upon O'Donnell, who contrived to collect about twelve thousand men about Moya, some ten or twelve miles south-west of Vich. Then, sending part of the force to descend upon Souham's quarters from the rear, he boldly marched with the main body, between seven and eight thousand men, into the plain in front and offered battle. The action was hard Feb. 20.  
fought, and the issue was for long in doubt until it was finally decided by the superiority of the French cavalry. O'Donnell then withdrew with a loss of eighteen hundred killed, wounded, and prisoners. He had no doubt sinned through over-confidence, but he had gone near to gain a victory. The French loss was about six hundred killed and wounded, Souham himself being so severely hurt that he was obliged to give up his command to Augereau's brother, and to seek recovery in France.

Three weeks later Augereau marched once more March 13.  
from Gerona with a huge convoy, himself escorting it with Italians and with a division of German troops which had recently joined him, while his brother's division moved parallel with him to westward by Vich and Manresa. On his way he relieved the force which was blockading Hostalrich by a new detachment. No mishap befell the convoy, its escort numbering in all

1810. nearly twenty thousand men; and after arriving at Barcelona, Augereau installed himself as governor under Napoleon's decree and turned over the business of the campaign to his brother. The Marshal's orders from Napoleon were that he should at once join Suchet, whose army was expected to arrive before Lerida on the 1st of March, and carry the war boldly forward in conjunction with the Third Corps. As shall presently be seen, Suchet was nowhere near Lerida on the appointed day; and the fact is sufficient to show the futility of the Emperor's attempt to direct operations in Spain from Paris. Nevertheless, Napoleon's vagaries can hardly excuse Augereau's actions. Himself remaining comfortably in Barcelona, he sent his brother with two divisions to Reuss, about twelve miles north and west of Tarragona, as an advanced base from which to attack the latter fortress; stationing eight or nine hundred men at Villafranca on the road between Barcelona and Reuss, and a brigade under General Schwarz at Manresa, presumably to parry any attack from the north. Such dispersion of force positively invited attack, and it can only be said for Augereau that he was now fifty-three years old, that he had lived a very hard life, and that his health had never recovered the toils, sickness, and wounds of the campaign of Eylau.

O'Donnell, meanwhile, had retired into Tarragona

March 27. with six thousand men, in time to reject Augereau's summons to surrender on the 27th of March. No sooner did he realise the situation than he sent out a

March 30. force of six thousand men under General Juan Caro, which fell upon Villafranca at dawn of the 30th, and after two hours' fighting killed or captured every French soldier in the place. Though wounded in the action, Caro at once moved towards Manresa, met a reinforcement of twelve hundred men on its way to the garrison, killed or took eight hundred of them, and drove the remainder back to Barcelona. He then blockaded Manresa itself, with the help of a number of the

inhabitants; whereupon Schwarz, despairing of succour, 1810. endeavoured to steal away on the night of the 4th of April; but was overtaken and his troops so roughly handled that only a third of them escaped to Barcelona, with Schwarz himself wounded and all baggage and artillery lost. Communication between Reuss and Barcelona was now completely cut off; and Augereau, fearing lest O'Donnell might turn his arms next against the isolated force before Hostalrich, sent an aide-de-camp by sea to recall the two divisions from Reuss. The vessel through good luck escaped capture by the British cruisers; and on the 7th General Augereau April 7. marched for Barcelona, which his men reached safely, though much harassed by the way, on the 9th. The April 9. only point gained by all these movements of troops was, that by the merest chance a detachment of the force at Reuss met another detachment from Suchet's army, and ascertained that Suchet was at last before Lerida.

But Marshal Augereau was now thoroughly frightened. He ordered Verdier to push forward as many troops of his division as he could spare to Granollers, so as to protect the blockading force before Hostalrich; and on the 11th he sent his Italian division to April 11. relieve that blockading force, while he himself retreated to Gerona with an immense train of vehicles, partly filled with the plunder of Barcelona. His excuse was that there were only ten days' supplies for his army if he kept it concentrated in the Catalonian capital, and that provisions could not be obtained elsewhere owing to the activity of the *somatenes*. Nor was the plea an empty one, for the only means of furnishing victuals to Barcelona, whether for the garrison or the civil population, was by dragging them overland from France. This necessitated large convoys; and large convoys demand large escorts, which likewise must be fed on the march. The result naturally followed that the escort consumed an appreciable part of the convoy's load on the way, and was obliged to return with the empty waggons as soon as possible, lest it should

1810. devour all the supplies which it had brought for the garrison. The vicious circle in which the service of supply must move in such circumstances cannot be escaped, and has been the despair of many officers. Napoleon, however, was not the man to allow the question of victuals to excuse a series of ill-planned operations which had issued in ignominious failure. If the Marshal had gone, as he had been bidden, to the plains between Lerida and Tarragona, he would, in the Emperor's judgment, have found abundance of

April 24. provisions.<sup>1</sup> On the 24th of April orders were despatched to Marshal Macdonald to proceed to Catalonia and there take command of the Seventh Corps; and it cannot be denied that Augereau fully deserved his supersession. He had lost from three to four thousand men, and had accomplished less than nothing. Even the petty stronghold of Hostalrich held out for four months until, provisions being absolutely exhausted, the

May 12. garrison sallied out on the night of the 12th of May, and succeeded in escaping, though with the loss of its commander and one-third of its number taken prisoners. Decidedly O'Donnell and not Augereau was the hero of this campaign.

In Aragon, as has been already mentioned, Napoleon's orders to Suchet that the Third Corps, now amounting to nearly twenty-four thousand effective men, should be before Lerida by the 1st of March, had not been carried out. Still earlier directions had prescribed to that General the siege either of Lerida or of Tortosa; the Emperor being particularly anxious that the Third and Seventh Corps should join hands, while Lerida was of special importance as the post which guarded the main gate from Aragon into Catalonia. But in the exaltation of his success in the Sierra Morena, Joseph had on the 27th of January already bidden Suchet to move rapidly upon Valencia, in the mistaken assurance that the Spaniards at large were now too much disheartened to resist him. The General, therefore, marched down with

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 24th April 1810.

eleven to twelve thousand men, came before Valencia 1810. on the 6th of March, summoned it, was answered with March 6. defiance, and, having no heavy guns, was fain to go back again. He retreated accordingly on the night of the 10th, March 10. to find that the guerillas were already busy on his lines of communication, and had cut off sundry small parties; and it cost Suchet a fortnight's work to drive them back again to their fastnesses. On his march southward he had received Napoleon's letter, already quoted, bidding him take no notice of orders from Madrid, but had thought it too late to turn back. Soon after his return to Zaragoza he received two letters of strong rebuke from the Emperor, which effectually cured him of all regard for the commands of Joseph.<sup>1</sup>

Having thus wasted two months, Suchet at the beginning of April left one division, a very inadequate force, to hold Aragon during his absence, and, marching with thirteen thousand men in two isolated columns upon Lerida, arrived before the fortress on the 13th. His troops were insufficient to invest the place thoroughly; and he found it so difficult to obtain intelligence of the Spanish movements about him that on the 19th he led a strong March 19. column of some five thousand men, including the greater part of his cavalry, on a reconnoitring expedition to eastward. The governor, General Garcia Conde, had already informed O'Donnell of the weakness of the besieging army; and on the 20th the eager young commander March 20. started from Tarragona with about nine thousand men, of whom seven thousand were regular infantry and four hundred cavalry. Most unfortunately for him, Suchet obtained information of his coming, brought back his column within three miles of Lerida, and disposed it on the evening of the 22nd so that O'Donnell should find April 22. on his front a weak detachment to engage him, while a formidable force, unseen but within striking distance, lay upon his flank. O'Donnell, encouraged by further news from Garcia Conde that a large portion of the French force had marched away, approached Lerida on

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Berthier, 9th, 20th April 1810.

1810. the 23rd in two detached bodies without any military  
April 23. precautions whatever ; and that although his march lay over an open plain, which afforded no shelter of any sort from an attack of cavalry. The result was that his advanced division was hopelessly routed by a single charge of the French horse, and that he was compelled to retreat with a loss of from three to four thousand men, at a cost to the French of little more than one hundred killed and wounded. Suchet then undertook the siege in earnest, and after one failure successfully  
May 13. stormed the defences of the town on the 13th of May. There still remained the castle or citadel, which in former sieges had made a prolonged resistance ; but Suchet met the difficulty by setting converging columns to drive the whole of the civil population up to this point, and by playing upon the unhappy people with his artillery as soon as he had penned them close into the castle-yard. Unable to endure this slaughter of women and children  
May 14. Garcia Conde on the 14th hoisted the white flag, and the conquest of Lerida was thus barbarously accomplished.

The next task prescribed to Suchet by Napoleon was the capture of Mequinenza, a small place but important from its situation at the confluence of the Segre and the Ebro. The fortifications were weak and old-fashioned, but the castle, which dominated them, was perched upon a height so lofty and rocky that it was out of range of artillery from any accessible spot ; and it was necessary for the French engineers to build a road, by which guns could be brought up to the  
May 15. summit. Suchet sent troops to invest Mequinenza on the day following the surrender of Lerida ; the  
June 8. road was taken in hand at once ; and on the 8th of June the French batteries opened fire with such terrible effect that on the same evening the garrison surrendered. Thus yet another refuge of the Spaniards on the north bank of the Ebro was taken, and the central district of that river was entirely subjected to the French arms. Suchet profited by the general dismay of his enemies

to seize the fort of Morella, which commands the 1810  
mountain road from Aragon into Valencia; but, as usual, the guerillas had risen in his rear while his army was engaged before Lerida, and had greatly maltreated some small bodies of French soldiers. Returning with his full strength, the General speedily chased his tormentors back to the mountains; and there now remained for him the final task of taking Tortosa, which would sever the principal communications between Valencia and Catalonia, and isolate the latter province completely.

The success of this enterprise depended mainly upon the distraction of O'Donnell's troops by the Seventh Corps, a duty which Augereau had failed to fulfil; not without peril, as we have seen, to Suchet's operations at Lerida. But on the 27th of May Napoleon gave orders<sup>1</sup> which were designed to set Suchet at his ease respecting O'Donnell, for they directed that Marshal Macdonald should march upon Tarragona, while the Third Corps besieged Tortosa, and that the latter force should be ready to move down upon Valencia as soon as both towns had fallen. Napoleon, since the catastrophe of Baylen, had learned wisdom; and there was to be no more rushing of armies blindfold into the heart of Spain, but steady progress and no second step until the foothold of the first had been assured.

Suchet accordingly pushed forward his preparations, organised a transport-service of mules, set over ten thousand men to work, amid stifling heat and clouds of mosquitoes, at the construction of fifty miles of road over the mountains from Mequinenza to Tortosa, fortified over twenty posts in Aragon upon the lines of communication, told off nine thousand men to hold the province in awe, and with the remaining seventeen thousand marched for the mouth of the Ebro. The advance was made in two columns, one on either bank of the river; whereof the right column, under General Laval, invested Tortosa on the right bank on the 4th

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Berthier, 27th, 29th May 1810.



1810. of July ; while the left column, under General Habert,  
July 4. took up a position about twenty-five miles north of the town, where two flying bridges ensured its communication with Laval. With this division Suchet established his headquarters at Mora, holding it ready to complete the investment, but prepared also to deal with a hostile army if one should present itself. On the 9th of July, however, Suchet ascertained that Macdonald was still at Gerona, and became seriously alarmed. O'Donnell had not been idle since his last defeat, but on the contrary had increased his force to over twenty thousand men, in five detachments, which he had so distributed as to give the greatest possible amount of trouble. One of these bodies lay far to north, between Figueras and Gerona, waiting to harass Macdonald's rear whenever he should move southward ; a second observed Barcelona ; two more lay, one a little to the west of Reuss and the other to the east of Lerida, watching the movements of Suchet ; and the fifth was in reserve near Tarragona ready to reinforce any one of the rest.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, besides this army of Catalonia there was that of Valencia, commanded, it is true, by an incomparably feeble General, Don José Caro, but still a power that must be reckoned with. In fact, until Macdonald should come before Tarragona, Suchet's position was radically insecure.

Macdonald, meanwhile, was engaged in more prosaic work, namely, the revictualling of Barcelona, and he did not enjoy it. He was without experience of such an undertaking as was expected of him in Catalonia, and abominated it. None the less was he compelled to escort three several convoys into Barcelona in June, July, and August ; nor was it until the end of July that he was able to give serious attention to the true object of the campaign. During this time the garrison of Tortosa made several sorties ; Caro sent a division forward against Morella ; and on  
July 29. the 29th of July O'Donnell, after a demonstration

<sup>1</sup> *Mem. de Suchet*, i. 357.

before Suchet's lines, threw into Tortosa three regiments, <sup>1810.</sup> with which, added to the existing garrison, he made a determined sally upon the besiegers. All of these attempts were failures, though combined action between the Spanish armies of Catalonia and Valencia might have been successful. O'Donnell then retired to Tarragona. A few days later Caro marched up with ten thousand men, but, having retreated immediately when six thousand French came out to meet him, was thereupon hounded from the command by his soldiers, and compelled to seek safety in flight. On this occasion at least the Spanish troops were justified in their mutinous deposition of a general.

Thus the precious weeks while Macdonald was still far away in the north were wasted by the Spaniards; and on the 20th of August Suchet received intelligence <sup>Aug. 20.</sup> that the Marshal was moving southward with fifteen thousand men. Macdonald, however, had found it useless to attempt the siege of Tarragona owing to want of provisions; for O'Donnell had taken care to remove all the corn from round the city and so to station his troops as to intercept all supplies and menace all victualling parties. O'Donnell, further, had harassed the Marshal through every mile of his march, and claimed to have inflicted on him a loss of three thousand men since he left Barcelona.<sup>1</sup> However, the French commanders met at Lerida on the 29th of August, and discussed their last instructions <sup>Aug. 29.</sup> from Paris, which were to the effect that Tortosa and Tarragona should be besieged simultaneously, and that, when both had fallen, Suchet should hold his corps in readiness to second the army of Portugal.<sup>2</sup> They judged, however, that they were not strong enough to prosecute more than one siege at a time, and agreed that Suchet, with the help of a Neapolitan division from the Seventh Corps, should proceed with the

<sup>1</sup> Arteché, ix. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Berthier to Suchet, 14th July 1810; *Corres. de Napoléon*, 16,651.

1810. operations against Tortosa ; while Macdonald, extending his troops eastward from Lerida through Tarrega and Cervera, should protect him from the interference of O'Donnell. Thus Suchet made over to his colleague the fertile plain of Urgel for the subsistence of the Seventh Corps, drawing his own supplies with difficulty from points so distant as Zaragoza to north-west and Teruel to south-west. But he was at any rate shielded from interference at Tortosa ; wherefore, taking advantage of high water on the Ebro, he brought his heavy artillery down from Mequinenza, under protection of the Neapolitan division, and by the 5th of Sept. 5. September was ready to begin the siege in earnest.

The concentration of the greater part of two French corps in Southern Catalonia gave the Spaniards precisely the opportunity that they desired. Communication between Barcelona and Lerida was at once cut off, as a matter of course ; and O'Donnell perceived that the moment was come for a stroke in the north. Leaving, therefore, two divisions to block the road between Sept. 6. Cervera and Barcelona, he on the 6th of September embarked a few troops with artillery and stores at Tarragona, sent them off by sea under convoy of a British and a Spanish frigate, and himself marched northward with Campoverde's division. Threading his way with great skill through the stations occupied by the Sept. 13. French, he on the 13th arrived with rather over six thousand men at Vidreras, a few miles due north of Gerona ; from whence he pounced upon a brigade of nearly thirteen hundred Germans, which was scattered in small bodies at La Bisbal and neighbouring places on the coast, and captured it almost to a man. O'Donnell being wounded then returned to Tarragona by sea, while Campoverde made a hasty raid northwards to Puigcerda, raised contributions on the French side of the Pyrenees, and was back again at Cardona, five and twenty miles north-east of Cervera, almost before Macdonald had heard of the mishap at La Bisbal. Learning, however, of Campoverde's approach, though

quite unaware that he had marched to the Pyrenees <sup>1810.</sup> and back, Macdonald on the 18th of October led four <sup>Oct. 18.</sup> brigades upon Cardona, and on the 21st encountered his adversary in a strong position near the town. His leading troops engaged the Spaniards prematurely; and, after losing about a hundred men, the Marshal abandoned the attack and retreated, much harassed by the *somatenes*. Such caution naturally seemed to the Spaniards to be fear; and they were heartened accordingly.

But in truth the old trouble of supplies was now enough to set Macdonald thinking of more serious matters than a doubtful action with Campoverde. The indefatigable partisan Villacampa had shifted his quarters to the district where the frontiers of Aragon, Castile, and Valencia meet, and had no intention of allowing convoys to pass to Suchet from Teruel. On the 6th <sup>Sept. 6.</sup> of September he captured six hundred head of cattle, killing or making prisoners the escort of two hundred men; and on the 7th he took six thousand more <sup>Sept. 7</sup> cattle, and drove the escort of a thousand soldiers with heavy loss into Alcañiz. Suchet, of course, sent out detachments against this troublesome adversary; but the wily chief was not easily to be caught. Indeed it was not until the 12th of November that he was at last <sup>Nov. 12.</sup> overtaken, and after a stubborn resistance compelled to withdraw, even so in good order, and with little greater loss than his assailants. But in the north the question of victuals was still more pressing. Those which Macdonald had already thrown into Barcelona were nearly exhausted. A large convoy had been attacked on the southern declivity of the Pyrenees, within a mile or two of the French frontier, by Baron de Eroles, one of O'Donnell's divisional generals, and captured with <sup>Oct. 17.</sup> a loss to the escort of two hundred and fifty men. More than that, Eroles four days later had defeated <sup>Oct. 21.</sup> a punitive column of two thousand men, and chased it into Figueras; while a still more formidable expedition of five thousand men, despatched against him later by

1810. the Emperor's special order, was after many small affrays finally hunted into Gerona, weaker by one thousand men than when it set out.

Another convoy was halted at Gerona, unable to proceed further; and a third was destined to start from Perpignan on the 2nd of November; but the General at Gerona felt so little confidence in the safety of either that he adjured Macdonald to protect them in person. To this appeal the Marshal could make but one answer. "If this convoy is taken or dispersed," he wrote to Suchet, "Barcelona will be lost, and there is no doubt that the enemy will do their utmost to intercept it. Only my presence can save it." There  
Nov. 4. was nothing more to be said; and on the 4th of November Macdonald marched northward for Gerona, leaving Suchet powerless to continue the siege of Tortosa. For two full months the Third and Seventh Corps had remained paralysed on the Lower Ebro. For nine full months, with an effective strength of nearly sixty thousand men, and against no force that could dare to meet even fifteen thousand of them in the field, they had accomplished nothing but the capture of three weak, almost petty, fortresses. In fact, so far from helping the Army of Portugal, as Napoleon had intended, they had wasted almost the entire campaign. The result was due to the admirable energy and enterprise of O'Donnell and of Villacampa; yet their efforts would have been vain but for the English fleet; and it is not too much to say that the fate of Catalonia hung upon England's command of the sea.

## CHAPTER XXXV

FROM the east of Spain it is now necessary to move 1810. southward, and to observe the progress of the French army in Andalusia in 1810. On the 3rd of February, as has been related, Alburquerque led his division on to Cadiz, just two days before Victor arrived before it; and by the 17th the garrison had been strengthened by Wellington's reinforcement from Portugal.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Victor had by no means realised the strength of Cadiz. He tried at first to approach the place along the high road to the bridge of Zuazo, but, finding the defences too strong, retired to Chiclana, and sought out a position from which to reduce the fort of Puntales. The nearest point was the fort of Matagorda, which, as we have seen, had been blown up by the Spaniards on the first coming of the French; but the British and Spanish engineers, growing nervous over the possible consequences if the place should pass into the enemy's hands, decided to restore the ruined works, remount six guns and two mortars, and station a naval force at hand to support it. Victor thereupon concluded that Matagorda must be worth taking, and threw up batteries, containing in all forty guns, to play upon it. The fort was little more than one hundred yards square, and the garrison, which consisted of a company of the old Ninety-fourth and a few gunners,

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Stewart to Wellington, 31st Jan.; Frere to Wellington, 14th Feb. The Seventy-ninth were between 900 and 1000 strong, the Ninety-fourth 670. Villiers to Wellington, 5th Feb. 1810.

1810. did not exceed one hundred and fifty men, so that it is difficult to understand how General Stewart should have expected any great help from it; and yet it seems certain that Henry Wellesley, who on the 6th of April replaced Frere as British diplomatic agent at Cadiz, attached importance to it, even if Stewart did not. Meanwhile for three days all operations were suspended by a furious south-westerly gale, which drove ashore two line-of-battle ships, the one Spanish and the other Portuguese, and over thirty British merchant vessels. Among these last was a transport containing three hundred men of the Fourth Foot, all of whom became prisoners.

March 26. On the 26th of March General Thomas Graham arrived to take over the command from Stewart, the British Government having decided to reinforce the garrison of Cadiz to a total strength of eight thousand men. Graham inspected Matagorda, and at once doubted the expediency of proceeding further with the defence, but allowed the work to continue. On

April 3. the 3rd of April the reinforcements<sup>1</sup> began to arrive to the number of about three thousand of all ranks, which were very welcome to the General. Matters were not going happily in Cadiz at the time; the local Junta of defence, under the presidency of General Venegas, not only contesting the authority of the Regency, but striving to arrogate its powers. Venegas presently departed as Viceroy to Mexico; but none the less Graham was met at the outset by an intimation from Albuquerque that he had resigned his command owing to the proceedings of the Junta, and was going as Ambassador to England. This in itself was discouraging, for Albuquerque was one of the few Spaniards who would work kindly with the British; but Graham was even more disquieted when he had examined the state of the defences. The works at the point of Santi Petri were, in his view, contemptible,

<sup>1</sup> 3 cos. R.A.; 6 cos. 2/1st Guards; 3 cos. 2/Coldstreams; 3 cos. 2/3rd Guards; 2/44th; 5 cos. 2 and 3/95th.

and those at the all-important bridge of Zuazo so <sup>1810.</sup> defective that he was unable to comprehend how the French could have been stopped by them. It was difficult to count upon any improvement of these fortifications by the Spaniards; while, even if all failings should be made good, the British General did not think that the whole of the reinforcements promised by Liverpool were sufficient for the security of the island of Leon. The loss of the island of course by no means signified the loss of Cadiz as a necessary military consequence; but it was extremely doubtful whether the perseverance of the inhabitants would survive such a misfortune.<sup>1</sup>

Graham set himself earnestly to remedy these shortcomings, in spite of every possible obstruction from the Regency, and was in course of preparing a general scheme of defence when, on the 21st of April, the <sup>April 21.</sup> French unmasked several batteries on the Trocadero, and, after driving off all ships within range by red-hot shot, turned the whole of their fire upon Matagorda. The little garrison answered gallantly, though they had but eight pieces against forty, and though the Spaniards at Fort Puntales refused to supply them with ammunition until a British naval officer seized it by force. Within eight hours after the firing began, Matagorda was reduced to a heap of ruins, and at ten on the morning of the 22nd it was evacuated by Graham's <sup>April 22.</sup> order. The little garrison of one hundred and forty-seven men<sup>2</sup> by that time had suffered sixty-four casualties, and Graham held up their conduct to the emulation of their comrades in a general order. The fall of the miserable little fort served the useful purpose of frightening the Spaniards into a spasmodic activity; but within less than a week their ardour cooled, and the only good work done was by the disciplined men of Alburquerque's army.

<sup>1</sup> Delavoye, *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, pp. 302-318.

<sup>2</sup> 1 officer, 25 men, R.A.; 25 Marines; 1 officer, 25 seamen; 3 officers, 67 men of the 94th. Total, 5 officers, 142 men.



1810. The French then busied themselves with restoring and re-arming Matagorda, together with Fort San José to the north and San Luis to the east of it, all for the purpose of bringing guns to bear upon Fort Puntales. The possession of these points enabled them to drive the shipping of the Allies to more distant positions in the inner and outer harbour, but gave them no further advantage. A great deal of ammunition was wasted on both sides between Puntales and the French batteries; and there was some alarm in Cadiz lest the city could be bombarded from Matagorda, till Graham banished all panic by firing a mortar with a heavy charge from the landward front of Cadiz, and showing by practical demonstration that the shells could not reach Matagorda. In truth, Victor was as intent upon fortifying his own position at Chiclana as upon any offensive action.

Meanwhile, the Regency had appointed Blake to be Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish forces in Cadiz, as well as in Murcia; and additional troops began gradually to accumulate in the city. At the end of April arrived a squadron of the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, giving Graham a small force of cavalry which he sorely needed; and at the end of May and June. beginning of June these were followed by two squadrons of the Second Hussars of the German Legion from England, the Thirtieth Foot<sup>1</sup> from Gibraltar, and between three and four thousand of Blake's army from Alicante. Altogether the British contingent, including the Portuguese regiment, numbered well over nine thousand of all ranks,<sup>2</sup> while the Spanish regular troops exceeded eighteen thousand. Such a force, of course, tempted Blake to advocate an attack upon Chiclana, much to the dismay of Graham, who foresaw that such an enterprise would probably mean the matching of his own few troops unaided against twice their number of French. Wellington, being consulted, gave his opinion strongly against any such plan, urging, appar-

<sup>1</sup> 2/30th.

<sup>2</sup> Return of 30th July. Delavoye, p. 397.

ently with selfishness but really with sound judgment, 1810. that Victor was much better employed in the useless blockade of Cadiz than in operations against Portugal through Estremadura. Fortunately the project was dropped, for Wellington's arguments, as Graham justly hinted, were not likely to commend themselves to Blake ; and, at Graham's own suggestion, another and more effective diversion was undertaken by the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup>

Sebastiani, it will be remembered, had not accompanied Victor to Cadiz, but had marched eastward against Malaga. After the storming of that town, he had been engaged for several weeks with guerilla-bands and other insurgents in the Alpujarras, immediately to the south of the Sierra Nevada. Having succeeded in subduing them for the moment, he assembled the greater part of his corps and marched eastward upon Lorca, entering that city on the 23rd of April, and April 23. setting a shameless and scandalous example of plunder, which was only too faithfully followed by his troops. He was apparently hoping for prosperous times, when on the 25th he was recalled to westward by the in- April 25. telligence that the insurgents in the Alpujarras were active once again. Moreover, other bands were equally aggressive in the mountains to south of Ronda, giving full employment to Girard's division of the Fifth Corps, which had been sent apart by Soult to hold them in check. Graham's plan was that a Spanish detachment should land at Algeciras, and with the help of the mountaineers overwhelm Girard. The enterprise was entrusted to the Spanish General Lacy, who duly sailed from Cadiz on the 19th of July with three July 19. thousand men. This force, already too small by one-half, was still further weakened by the accidental separation of eight hundred men ; and finally, with little more than two thousand soldiers, Lacy, who was not a great commander, marched up to Ronda, quarrelled with the insurgents and marched back again, upon the news that

<sup>1</sup> Delavoye, pp. 379, 383, 387.

1810. Girard and Sebastiani were both closing upon him. The whole operation was inexpressibly feeble, and yet it served some purpose. In the first place, Lacy left a garrison in the port of Marbella ; and in the second, despite of his unconciliatory bearing, his appearance heartened the insurgents, and diverted Girard and Sebastiani from more profitable objects.

The next undertaking of the Regency was to despatch this same Lacy with three thousand men by sea to Huelva, in the hope of gaining the district from which Cadiz drew most of its supplies. There was already a small Spanish force in the vicinity under General Copons, while the French, under General Remond and the Duke of Arenberg, were truly reported to be in very inferior strength. The landing Aug. 23. was successfully accomplished on the 23rd of August. Two small detachments of the enemy were met and defeated ; Arenberg called in the rest and retired in haste towards Seville ; and all seemed to be going well, when Lacy decided that the purport of his expedition was accomplished and, to the huge disgust of the inhabitants, re-embarked for Cadiz. None the less Soult, whose operations shall presently be narrated, had on the first alarm of this raid detached Gazan's division of the Fifth Corps to suppress it, and had thereby crippled himself at a critical moment. But this was due to a fortunate coincidence rather than to the skill of Lacy or the foresight of the Regency.

Another diversion in Andalusia, almost simultaneous with that just narrated, was more serious. In August Blake returned on a visit of inspection to Murcia, from which he pushed reconnaissances into the province of Granada and sent help to the insurgents in the Alpujarras. Sebastiani at once concentrated his corps and marched against him ; whereupon Blake, with excellent judgment, retired upon Murcia itself, before which he took up a position so strong that Sebastiani dared not attack it. The French general therefore turned back, to find that the insurgents had risen instantly in his

absence, and among other mischief had captured the 1810. seaports of Almuñecar and Motril, together with their garrisons. This was a good example of the right way in which to use the few regular troops which the Spanish possessed, namely, as decoys to draw the French into long marches to no purpose, thus enabling the guerilla-bands to destroy the enemy's outlying posts. Under two skilful leaders the guerillas and the regulars could continue to keep the French perpetually moving, with one elusive enemy in their front and another in their rear—the kind of work which will wear out the best of soldiers with sheer exhaustion and disgust. Blake, however, like most of his peers, could not resist the temptation to fight a great action; and accordingly some weeks after Sebastiani's retreat he left his old position on the borders of Murcia and marched upon Nov. 2. Baza, which was occupied by four French battalions. Unluckily for him, General Milhaud came up with thirteen hundred cavalry, caught Blake's army on the march with a wide gap between his two divisions of infantry, and charging the foremost, together with the cavalry that covered it, routed it completely in a few minutes, with a loss to the Spaniards of fifteen hundred killed and wounded.<sup>1</sup> Blake then retired once again into Murcia with the wreck of his force, not yet, in spite of many defeats, an enlightened man.

Lastly, a brief account must be given of a diversion attempted in Andalusia by General Campbell, the governor of Gibraltar, with about three hundred and forty of the Eighty-ninth,<sup>2</sup> five hundred German, Polish, and Italian deserters from the French army, and a Spanish regiment from Ceuta. The whole force, numbering fourteen hundred men and speaking five different languages, was placed under command

<sup>1</sup> Lord Blayney, who saw the prisoners, says that one third of them were half-starved boys, and another third infirm old men. i. 124-125.

<sup>2</sup> Four companies, 300 rank and file, not a battalion, as stated by Napier, Arteché, and Mr. Oman. The last named omits all mention of the 500 deserters.

1810. of Major-general Lord Blayney, a veteran who since the beginning of the war had served with distinction in Flanders, the West Indies, Egypt, the Cape, and North America. The object of the expedition appears to have been, generally, to hamper the siege of Cadiz by distracting the attention and interrupting the communications of the besiegers. Victor drew his provisions almost exclusively from Seville; and it was therefore important to encourage the insurgents about Ronda, Mijas, and Fuengirola, which lay upon the eastern flank of the line of supply.<sup>1</sup> The garrisons of all three of these places were reported to be weak; and hopes were held out that the population of Malaga itself might rise and overpower the French within the city, if countenanced by a force from without. Moreover, there was a vague and not wholly unsound idea that the possession of a fortified port in the south might be of service for the purpose of diversions and raids upon the French posts at large in Andalusia. Accordingly, on Oct. 10. the 10th of October Blayney embarked on the King's frigate *Topaze*, and sailed round to Ceuta, where he found the Spanish regiment embarked, and, according to its Colonel's report, ready for immediate service. Knowing, however, something of the Spanish character, the General looked into matters for himself, and discovered

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman, following Napier and Arteché, says that the plan was for the force to make a descent upon Fuengirola, so as to call Sebastiani out of Malaga with the bulk of his force; and when the French were approaching Fuengirola, to embark and make a dash for Malaga, thus weakened by the withdrawal of Sebastiani's troops, secret partisans being ready within the city to second the movement. Mr. Oman rightly condemns such a plan, which, looking to the uncertainty of the sea, was simply insane; but it does not appear from Blayney's own account that he knew anything of it. On the contrary, it seems from his letter to the Governor of Gibraltar that he counted upon Blake's keeping Sebastiani fully occupied in Granada. Lastly, he absolutely refused to adopt the plan for a dash upon Malaga, suggested by a naval officer in reliance upon Spanish reports that the cannon upon the Mole had been removed—which reports he afterwards ascertained to be false. See Blayney's *Narrative of a Journey through Spain and France*, i. 2-4, 52, 118; ii. 488-489.

that one hundred and fifty of the men were without 1810. firelocks, and that not one of the entire regiment had a single round of ammunition. Having rectified these little omissions, Blayney sailed from Ceuta, picked up a detachment of gun-boats from Gibraltar, and, after a long passage under light winds, landed unopposed on the morning of the 14th in a bay two leagues west of Fuengirola.

Here he was met by a British officer, who had been Oct. 14. appointed to organise the Spanish peasants, and who now informed him that arms and ammunition had been distributed among them, and that a considerable number might be expected to join him immediately. Only a dozen peasants, however, made their appearance; but none the less Blayney, having trained his polyglot detachment to obey a few bugle-calls, in default of a common language, marched over the mountains to Fuengirola, and coming before it at two o'clock in the afternoon, summoned it to surrender. The commandant refused; and the fort, which proved to be far more formidable than had been represented, opened a heavy fire which did some damage both to the troops ashore and to the gun-boats at sea. This was disquieting; and not less so was a report that a large force of the enemy was approaching. This was plain proof that the object of the expedition had either been divined by the French during its slow passage from Ceuta, or revealed by some traitor at Cadiz or Gibraltar. Two courses lay open to Blayney—to attack the fort without delay by escalade, or to re-embark. The former he rejected at once; and wisely, for he had only three hundred men upon whom he could depend, and the strength of the place forbade all hope of success. The second he rejected likewise, from natural though blameworthy unwillingness to appear unenterprising in the presence of foreign troops. He therefore waited until night so that the darkness might protect the disembarkation of his artillery from the guns of the fort; and, by astonishing exertions of the seamen and troops, two

1810. batteries, the one of three light ordnance and the other of a thirty-two pounder carronade, were completed before dawn.

Oct. 15. With the coming of light both sides opened fire, but Blayney's guns were of too small calibre to make a practicable breach; and the General, who had counted upon the moral effect of a bombardment to overawe a weak and insufficient garrison, now learned that Fuengirola had been reinforced before his arrival. At the same time former reports were confirmed by the certain intelligence that Sebastiani was advancing with over five thousand men. It was now manifest that Blayney could re-embark only at the sacrifice of his artillery; but, observing H.M.S. *Rodney* in the offing with the Eighty-second regiment, which had been sent to reinforce him, he decided to stand his ground, chose a strong position with its rear to the sea, and hastened down to the gun-boats so as to arrange for the protection of each flank by two of them. During his absence the garrison made a sortie upon the battery, whereupon the foreign troops, who were at the moment in sole charge of it, gave way and fled almost without resistance. Relanding, Blayney at once caught up the Eighty-ninth, which was employed in bringing up supplies, charged the enemy, and retook the cannon. The head of Sebastiani's column now came up, and Blayney, whose horse had been killed under him, being uncertain whether they were Spanish or French, ordered the firing to cease. When he discovered his error he again charged, but was cut off and captured, together with every man of the Eighty-ninth. It appears that at the critical moment the Germans deserted to the enemy,<sup>1</sup> while the remainder of the troops ran to the boats, where two companies of the Eighty-second, which had landed from the *Rodney*, covered their re-embarkation.

All authors so far have ascribed the failure of the enterprise to the faults of the commander, Napier in particular speaking of the expedition as well contrived

<sup>1</sup> Blayney, i. 42.

and adequate to its purpose, but ruined by mis- 1810.  
conduct.<sup>1</sup> The whole of this criticism is based on the assumption that it would have been possible for Blayney to draw Sebastiani and the mass of his force from Malaga to Fuengirola by a feint attack, re-embark, sail to Malaga, disembark, and capture the city by a *coup de main* before Sebastiani should have time to return. This, of course, ignores the whole question whether there was any wind at all, or, if there were a wind, whether it was fair or foul. But it is to be noticed that Sebastiani's leading troops arrived from Malaga in less than twenty-four hours from the time of Blayney's appearance before Fuengirola. Hence, if Blayney had re-embarked before they came up and sailed for Malaga, the French cavalry would have seen the ship at sea, and Sebastiani would have been

<sup>1</sup> Napier's account of the affair occupies a page and a half, and contains the following blunders. He gives Blayney a whole battalion of the Eighty-ninth, whereas the General had only four weak companies. He gives no date for the landing, but states that Blayney remained for two days cannonading the castle. As a matter of fact, Blayney was before Fuengirola for less than twenty-four hours altogether, and could not have cannonaded it for more than four hours at the most. He says that the garrison, not exceeding two hundred, made a sortie, took the battery, and drove the British part of the investing force headlong towards the boats. Blayney estimated the sallying party at six hundred and fifty foot and sixty horse; and, though he may have been mistaken as to the actual number, it is hardly likely that he would have made so gross a miscalculation as is implied. Moreover, Blayney says distinctly that his foreign troops were in charge of the battery, and that the Eighty-ninth were procuring provisions, when he reformed them and retook the battery, wherefore they could not have been driven to the boats. Lastly, Napier asserts that after the recapture of the guns, two French squadrons came up, that Blayney, mistaking them for Spaniards, ceased firing, advanced towards them, and was immediately taken prisoner. Blayney, on the other hand, asserts that the troops which captured him were infantry, and names the regiment—the Fourth Polish—which, as a matter of fact, formed part of Sebastiani's corps. Moreover, he was taken after a sharp fight with the bayonet. Mr. Oman asserts that Blayney was short-sighted, and that he rode by mistake into the middle of the French. Blayney himself is most careful to say that he was on foot because his horse had been killed.



1810. able to countermarch the rear of his column some miles short of Fuengirola. Moreover, the landing-place proposed by the naval officers was on the river Guadalhorce, four to five miles from Malaga and running through an extensive plain, where the French cavalry would have had every advantage. Lastly, even if the cavalry had been absent, the citadel of Malaga was advantageously situated and in perfect order, mounting fifty guns; and this stronghold must have been carried by escalade within twelve hours of disembarkation under pain of certain disaster. Taking all these facts into consideration, it seems to me absurd to say that the enterprise was well contrived and adequate to its purpose. On the contrary, it would appear as foolish a project as ever was devised by sanguine men upon imperfect information.

As to the misconduct of the commander it is not more easy to speak, for it is evident, in the first place, that he and those who sent him differed greatly in their ideas of what he was intended to do. But it is certain that to send him away upon any mission with a force of fifteen to sixteen hundred troops speaking five different languages, and with only three hundred men among them upon whom the slightest reliance could be placed, was to invite failure. It is stated that Blayney was surprised at Fuengirola because he omitted to take reasonable military precautions. Against this it must be said that he sent four companies of Spaniards to a defile within half a mile of Mijas, by which the French were bound to pass, and where they could have been checked for any time; but that these troops insisted, against Blayney's orders, on attacking Mijas itself, and were repulsed with such vigour that they fell back to the main body. This certainly was not the act of a man who neglects precautions; and it must be added that it is not very easy for a force to protect itself against surprise when it possesses not a single mounted man, when three-fourths of its numbers are not to be trusted to await the approach of an enemy, and when,

even if they could be so trusted, their reports from the 1810. front are unintelligible to the commander-in-chief. It may freely be conceded that Blayney was more than foolish to attempt anything until the Eighty-second joined him, but something harder must be said of the General who sent him away with his original force. It is said that Blayney tormented Campbell into despatching this miserable expedition to Fuengirola. If so, it must be confessed that he thoroughly deserved his misfortune.

The result of all these petty operations in Andalusia was that the contending forces found themselves at the end of 1810 very much where they had been at the beginning. The troops in the field made no progress upon either side, and the siege, or rather the blockade, of Cadiz remained stationary. Within the city itself there were evening parties, love-making, and swaggering, as if no such thing as a French army were within a thousand miles; and the improvement of the defences, though occasionally quickened for a brief moment by some scare, went forward very languidly. In August, as shall be told in place, Wellington withdrew two British battalions from the Isle of Leon to Portugal; but the event caused little emotion. Strange visitors appeared at times; Lucien Bonaparte flying from the wrath of his brother; Louis Philippe of Orleans intriguing to be made Regent, and struggling against the rival pretensions of Carlotta, wife of the Regent of Portugal and Brazil, who was the eldest daughter of the deposed King Charles the Fourth. Neither of these claimants succeeded in their ambitious efforts; and in September they were finally extinguished by the meeting of the Cortes, which, from the moment of its assembling on the 24th, aspired to the absolute control Sept. 24. of Spain.

This remarkable body was nominally composed of elected representatives of Spain and her Colonies; but since no elections at all were held in the Colonies, and such as were held in Spain were, owing to the presence

1810. of the French, very irregular, the majority of the members were chosen as best they might be. Very many were elected by obscure cliques of politicians who represented nothing but their own fanciful ideas, with the result that Spain, the most conservative of countries, found herself governed by a liberal assembly, modelled in many respects upon the Convention of Revolutionary France. The Cortes abjured all claims to any but legislative functions, leaving judicial matters to the Courts of Law, and executive to the Regency; yet they arrogated to themselves the style of Majesty, vouchsafed to the Regency the lower rank of Highness only, and required the Regents to take an oath of allegiance to them. This act they followed up in a few weeks by dismissing the existing Regency, and appointing a new one consisting of Blake, the always unsuccessful general, Admiral Cisar, who commanded the squadron at Carthagena, and an unknown naval officer, Pedro Agar, who being of Colonial birth was held to represent the Colonies. As to the constitutional debates of the Cortes, and the flood of their eloquence upon various subjects, this is no place to speak. The point for us is that the new government of Spain was no better than the old. By some strain upon the imagination it might be considered to enjoy a better legal title than its predecessor; but for purposes of administration, and in particular for the conduct of the war, it was no more efficient, for, while nominally confining itself only to talk, it would not permit any executive to act. Once more, then, it must be said that in every respect the situation in Andalusia remained practically unchanged during 1810.

So far, then, the exploits of four of Napoleon's eight corps have been surveyed, and it has been shown that they had to all intent no effect upon the more vital operations in the west of the Peninsula. It is now time to pass to the doings of the four remaining corps and of the French troops in the extreme north, who were not attached to any one of them. The positions of

these, when we last saw them, were as follows: 1810. Mortier's corps, the Fifth, had taken part in the Andalusian campaign, but, when Victor marched on to Cadiz, had halted at Seville. Soult's corps, the Second, under the temporary command of General Heudelet, had been left on the Tagus about Oropesa to protect the rear of Joseph during the invasion of Andalusia. Ney's corps, the Sixth, was at Salamanca. General Bonnet, whose troops were engaged in holding down Asturias, had his headquarters at Santander. Napoleon, as we know, intended that the Second and Sixth Corps, with an Eighth Corps under Junot which formed part of the reinforcements from France, should compose the Army of Portugal; but the experience of Baylen had taught him wisdom, and he was desirous of making the ground safe behind him before advancing in earnest.<sup>1</sup> The idea took immediate shape in December, through an order, already mentioned, for the formation of a Ninth Corps, whose special function it should be to protect the rear of the Army;<sup>2</sup> but, until the time should be ripe for the final invasion of Portugal, the Emperor determined to employ his troops in the work of reducing the insurgents and peasantry in the provinces which he already occupied. As its drafts and reinforcements joined it, therefore, Loison's division of Ney's corps received instructions to move first to Valladolid, and thence to Benavente Dec. 17. and Astorga, so as to repress Leon and to check any Spanish incursions from Galicia, while Bonnet should act either in concert with Loison or independently for the subjugation of Asturias.<sup>3</sup> Activity against the guerilla-bands was enjoined also upon the two infantry divisions of Junot's corps at Logroño and Burgos, in combination with Loison and Bonnet. Upon paper the entire scheme appeared exceedingly

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 30th Oct. 1809; *Corres. de Napoléon*, 15,987.

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon to Clarke, 15th Dec. 1809.

<sup>3</sup> *Corres. de Napoléon*, 16,131, 16,132, 16,245.

1810. promising: it did not proceed so smoothly into execution.

Taking Asturias first, it must be remembered that Del Parque had stripped the province of most of its regular troops, and notably of the division of Ballesteros, for the campaign of Tamames. There remained only a weak division of about four thousand men, which lay behind the river Deva at Colombres, from thirty to forty miles west of Santander; and two thousand more, under a new commander-in-chief, General Arce, at Oviedo. By the end of January the French troops at Santander, having been reinforced to a strength of seven thousand men, drove the Asturians with little difficulty from their lines to a

Jan. 31. strong position behind the Nalon. On the 31st, accordingly, Bonnet entered Oviedo; but, alarmed by a movement of the partisan Porlier round his rear and northern flank, he evacuated the city on the 12th of February, and, falling back a few miles eastward, stood on the defensive. The Asturians thereupon, with the usual blind confidence of their race, hurried after him in defiance of the orders of their General,

Feb. 14. suffered a severe defeat, and once again took refuge behind the Nalon. Passing at once from sanguine hope to abject despair, the Asturians looked for nothing but the invasion of Galicia, which, being threatened also by Loison from the side of Astorga, seemed to be defenceless. However, Bonnet did not follow up his advantage further than by a second occupation of Oviedo; and the Asturians, having been joined by two thousand Galicians, regained strength and hope.

A new Junta now took over the affairs of the province, superseded Arce by General Cienfuegos, and resolved to signalise its accession to power and the arrival of the Galician troops by taking the offensive. The aforesaid Galician troops were of inferior composition and quality, and were destitute of clothing, appointments, and even bayonets; but their reputation

was great, and Bonnet, hearing that they were on the right of the Spanish line, strengthened his left to meet them. Hence, when the Spaniards attacked on the 19th of March, the Asturians were able to break through the French centre ; and Bonnet, evacuating Oviedo for the second time, fell back some forty miles eastward to Cangas de Onis to await reinforcements. Having received them, he advanced again on the 28th with his whole division, whereupon the Spaniards retired hurriedly before him to their old position on the Nalon. Here they remained until the 27th, making constant attacks upon the French in front, while the guerilla-bands harassed their enemy in rear ; but the Junta was too inept to reinforce the army, which steadily diminished through losses and desertion ; and on the 27th, Bonnet, having been apprised of the fall of Astorga, assailed and carried the lines of the Nalon and drove the Spaniards westward to the left bank of the Navia. This stroke, however, exhausted his strength, for the occupation of the conquered territory absorbed almost his entire force. Here, as elsewhere, the withdrawal of troops from any place for concentration in another spot signified the unchaining of the guerilla-bands and dangerous mischief let loose. Bonnet's division, therefore, remained for the present victorious indeed, but weakened by heavy losses, and paralysed for any efficient share in the general operations.

In June, however, he was again provoked into taking the offensive. Early in that month General Mahy with the Galicians made a threatening movement upon Astorga, attracting the attention of the French troops in Leon to that quarter, while the Asturian bands, eluding Bonnet, slipped down the pass of Pajares and surprised the town of Leon. They were driven from it in two days by the arrival of the French from before Astorga ; and Bonnet then marched again westward in force, to make an end of these troublesome enemies. He chased them over the Narcea and the

1810. Navia ; but on reaching Castropol on the Galician frontier he discovered that the Asturians had doubled back behind him, some by land and some by sea, had severed his communications and were threatening his base at Oviedo. Perforce he countermarched in pursuit of them, and continued to hunt them without success through the summer and autumn. It is impossible not to feel compassion for a general employed in so hopeless a task.<sup>1</sup>

Feb. 11. Meanwhile, Loison had advanced, pursuant to his orders, with a force of about twelve thousand men and eight field-guns, and had arrived before Astorga on the 11th of February. The mediæval walls of the place had been repaired and strengthened with more modern works by Romana ; fourteen guns, nearly all of light calibre, had been mounted on them ; and there was a garrison of twenty-seven hundred Galicians under a resolute Governor, Don José Santocildes. All this was a disagreeable surprise to Loison, who had expected to find no such powers of resistance. Had he known that there were only twenty days' supplies in the place he might have acted differently ; but, as things were, he fell back south-eastward to La Bañeza, sent a summons to Santocildes, and, on receiving a defiant answer, reported that he was helpless for want of siege-artillery. His attempts to communicate with Bonnet by the pass of Pajares had proved futile, owing to the depth of the snow on the mountains ; and altogether his march, directed by Napoleon himself, had turned out absolutely unprofitable.

A few days later, Loison's place at La Bañeza was taken by Clausel's division of the Eighth Corps ; and the former received orders to join his own corps, that of Ney, at Salamanca. Clausel likewise sent on the Feb. 26. 26th a summons to Santocildes ; but such an answer as had been sent to Loison was returned again, and he was fain to possess his soul in patience. Owing to the vast demand for horses, and the crowded state of the

<sup>1</sup> Arteche, viii. 120-144 ; Oman, iii. 270-271.

roads, consequent upon the gigantic movement of 1810. troops into Spain, Junot's siege-train was still far away; and without it, no matter how unreasonable the behaviour of Santocildes might appear, there could be no attack on Astorga. In high impatience, Junot begged for Spanish heavy guns from Segovia and Burgos, and sent his own teams to draw them; which done, he, on the 15th of March, ordered the whole of his corps to Astorga. On the 21st the place was March 21. invested, and the works were begun; on the 15th of April the cannon arrived; and by the 21st an easy breach had been made, which was assaulted on the same day. The assailants carried the breach, but were unable to penetrate into the retrenchments; and indeed Santocildes might have held out for some time longer but for the exhaustion of his ammunition. Owing to this cause he surrendered at daybreak of the 22nd, April 22. having made a very skilful and gallant defence which cost the besiegers nearly six hundred casualties. Junot then left two battalions as a garrison in Astorga, besides a regiment to open communications with Bonnet, and led the bulk of the Eighth Corps back to Valladolid and Toro, to abide the opening of the campaign in Portugal.

Passing next to the Sixth Corps under Ney, there is little at present to be said except that, by Joseph's orders, it marched to Ciudad Rodrigo simultaneously with the movement of Loison to Astorga; summoned that city on the 12th of February; and, being defied, returned to Salamanca to await the coming of siege-artillery and a general advance under Massena.

The Second and the Fifth Corps were more actively engaged. Upon reaching Seville, Mortier was directed by Joseph to leave one division in that town and in the district to east of it, and to march with the other division and with his cavalry to Badajoz. He reached that city on the 12th of February with about nine Feb. 12. thousand men, but found himself in the vicinity of forces too formidable to allow him to blockade the



1810. place. Romana had arrived there on the 5th to take over the command of Del Parque's army, and the bulk of that army itself had crossed the Tagus on the 10th and reached Alburquerque, only a day's march north of Badajoz. More Spanish troops, detachments which had been left behind by the Duke of Alburquerque, were on the Ibor watching the Second Corps; and Romana, perceiving the danger to them of Mortier's march upon their western flank, was about to draw them likewise towards the Guadiana. Mortier, therefore, drew back to Olivenza and Valverde, where his
- Feb. 19. cavalry was surprised on the 19th by the Estremaduran partisan Morillo, and the French commander, General Beauregard, was killed. Meanwhile, on hearing of the check to the Fifth Corps before Badajoz, Heudelet
- Feb. 23. advanced with two brigades of infantry and one of cavalry towards Alburquerque; but, not venturing to risk an action, turned south-eastward to Merida, where Reynier arrived to supersede him. Mortier's corps opened communications with Reynier from Zafra by way of Almendralejo; and we shall see that this junction of the two corps on the Guadiana led Wellington to move Hill's corps forward for a time from Abrantes to Portalegre, in order to second Romana. But such concentration did not last long. An insurrection in the Sierra de Ronda obliged Joseph to recall Mortier with most of his troops to Seville, and, at the same time, to direct Reynier to move his headquarters to Truxillo. By the 18th of March, the two corps had gone their different ways, and the French semblance of the offensive on the Guadiana came to an end.

Romana, meanwhile, having collected the whole of his forces, some twenty-six thousand men in all, extended them in a long line facing eastward, from Alburquerque on the north to Olivenza on the south; his second division under Carlos O'Donnell being about Alburquerque, his first about Badajoz and Campo Mayor, and the third under Ballesteros at

Olivenza. This done, he prepared to act upon the 1810. French communications. Carlos O'Donnell made the first movement upon Cáceres on the 12th of March, March 12. and on the 14th encountered a force of half his numbers under General Foy, which was only saved from destruction by the utmost skill and exertion on the part of the commander.<sup>1</sup> Ballesteros then struck south against a detachment of Gazan's division, which March 26. Mortier had left at Santa Olalla, attacked it as it was retiring at Ronquillo, and drove it still farther back. He then turned westward against another French detachment at Moguer, a movement which drew Mortier with every man that he could spare from Seville to chase the Spaniards away. The Marshal caught Ballesteros at Zalamea la Real, and after a sharp April 15. action drove him northward into the Sierra de Aracena. There the Spanish chief remained, perpetually descending to distract Mortier from other operations, while O'Donnell, by constant menaces, contrived to keep Reynier equally inactive. Had either of the two French corps been able to join the other, they might have accomplished something. Singly, they were powerless. The Second Corps, as we shall see, presently took its appointed place in the Army of Portugal; not so the Fifth, whose co-operation with that army would seriously have increased Wellington's difficulties. Mortier's corps was, in fact, the unknown quantity which threatened Portugal from the south and east. If it could be spared from Andalusia, its intrusion was bound to be of some moment, though not necessarily fatal, to Portugal. If not, Wellington could confront the future with patience and hope. Having dealt with all movements which lay outside the sphere of its operations in the Peninsula during 1810, let us now return to the British Army.

<sup>1</sup> Foy was prouder of this day's work than of any other in his military career, and with good reason. *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, pp. 88-91.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

OUR last sight of Wellington was on the 12th of 1810. January, upon which day he established his headquarters at Vizeu. He had then completed one full and eventful campaign in the Peninsula; and it will be well before going farther to take stock of his army and of the system upon which he commanded it.

First, therefore, let us look at the staff at headquarters. The chief was his Quartermaster-general, George Murray, who had served in the like capacity with Moore in Sweden and in Spain, and with Wellington himself from his first coming to the Peninsula. He was an able and trustworthy soldier of whom Wellington thought highly, yet he was not by any means admitted to the secrets of the Commander-in-Chief. Even less so was the Adjutant-general, Charles Stewart, Castlereagh's brother, who had been accepted for that post by Wellington principally in order to keep him quiet, and who in his self-importance chafed not a little at the restraint which limited his functions to the preparation of field-states. Stewart poured out his afflicted soul to his brother in words which are among the most valuable which we possess for the understanding of Wellington's methods.<sup>1</sup> The Quartermaster and Adjutant-general were, he com-

<sup>1</sup> I transcribe the entire passage as being of no ordinary interest. C. Stewart to Castlereagh, 24th Aug. 1809, *Londonderry MSS.* "In the first place, I think both the situations of Adjt. Genl. and Qr. Mr. Genl. are not understood in our Army, nor is the business conducted through them in such a manner as to render the offices as interesting or as important as they are in most of the other Army's in Europe. I think this has grown up with us from the system at

plained, subordinate to the Military Secretary in all secret communications and important business, and were left to pick up information, even on the most essential changes, from that officer. He added that this system had grown up owing to the example set at the Horse Guards by the Commander-in-Chief.

Stewart was right in declaring that he and Murray were reduced very much to the status of clerks, but he was wrong in assuming that the Military Secretary was more favoured than they. In 1809 and 1810, the officer who held the appointment last named was Colonel Bathurst, a brother of the hapless envoy Benjamin Bathurst, who disappeared mysteriously from human ken when on his way home from Vienna with despatches in 1809; but the Military Secretary never for a moment acted upon his own initiative. Wellington was in fact his own chief of the staff, and directed the movements of the army principally through the private letters to his generals which are printed in his correspondence. Sometimes these

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the Horse Guards, which, by throwing every matter of interest or moment into the hands of the Military Secretary (an inferior officer as to rank), places both the Adj. & Qr. Mr. Genl. in a great measure under him, and after him in all confidential & secret communications, and all important business of the Army. I know this is felt by Murray here as well as myself, and I have no doubt it is also felt, though submitted to, in England. It is needless to point out the numerous instances where this becomes unpleasant in an Army on Service. Perhaps this arrangement is one which on some occasions may have its advantages, but it must ever be a drawback in my mind against the offices above mentioned. With an irregular mode of getting through business the Adj. Genl. and Qr. Mr. Genl. may pick up at one moment every information and intelligence; at another they may know nothing and be ignorant of the most essential changes that have been directed (without reference) through the channell of the Milly. Secry. In short, it is difficult, where there is great quickness and where you cannot be always at hand, to be as *au fait* as if there was more system and arrangement. You can not in a moving army have the clock-work of clerks, etc., (as) at the Horse Guards, and if every order and arrangement is not made through the Hds. of Depts., they being privy to everything, the machine will not work as it ought. I state this with confidence. The situation and business

1810. were copied fair by his staff from his drafts and signed by him ; more often the originals in his own hand were sent off, and a copy only was taken by his staff for record. Possibly a great many were never recorded at all. The letters of his generals in turn were likewise addressed directly to him ; his personal friends writing with some degree of familiarity, but the rest with as rigid formality as in a purely official correspondence. On very rare occasions Murray would, during any short absence of Wellington, give some very obvious order to one body or another of troops ; but this was a most unusual occurrence, for the Commander-in-Chief was very jealous of his own authority. This jealousy no doubt had much to do with the faultiness of his dispositions at Talavera ; no man daring to correct them without his express command.

Even less had the staff at large to do with the matter of intelligence, which Wellington appears to have kept very much in his own hands. His intelligencers

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of Adj. Genl., deprived of close communication with the Head of the Army, is reduced to keeping accurately the Returns of all descriptions of Regts., making General Returns from these for the offices in England or for the Comm<sup>r</sup> of the Forces, corresponding with all the detached officers of the Army and Officers comm<sup>d</sup> Corps on all casualties that occur, making arrangements for the sick, convalescents, etc., of the Army. Having all this correspondence regularly and accurately kept, managing all Genl. Ct. Martials, preparing the evidences, crimes, etc., fixing all details of duty with the different Divisions of the Army, etc.—this is all most essential in the existence of the Army, but you will admit it does not carry with it interesting or pleasing occupation. To many Officers, who have been brought up in the School of an orderly-room, it is not disagreeable ; but to others who have been more constantly employ'd in the field, it becomes irksome, and though in point of emolument, consequence, and what many would call ease, the office is one many would covet, I think I have said enough to show you (after six months' tryal) that it is not an employment I should remain in for pleasure. By what I have said I do not mean to infer that I have ever been shut out from W<sup>a</sup> (Wellesley's) confidence ; on the contrary, he is as kind to me at times as ever, and no one is always equal. Indeed, I should be in the highest degree unjust did I not declare that I believe his friendship, attachment, and confidence in me most sincere."

were as usual divided into two classes, scouts and 1810. spies ; but both stood upon rather an unusual footing towards the Commander-in-Chief. Spanish spies were, of course, scattered in all quarters ; but the most important of them, alike for regularity, minuteness, and accuracy of information, dated his letters always from Salamanca, with agents apparently at Valladolid and Burgos. Of the British spies the most celebrated was John Grant, who began life first in the Fourth Foot, then went on half-pay and served seven years in the Caithness Militia as a captain, rejoined the army in 1809, and meanwhile obtained a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Portuguese service. He generally haunted the valley of the Tagus, and was both indefatigable and efficient. Once, in January 1810, he succeeded in intercepting Napoleon's private letters to Joseph, and sent them to Wellington with an intimation that he had obtained them by "great labour, much risk and considerable expense," but would give no further details.<sup>1</sup> He is frequently confounded with Colquhoun Grant of the Eleventh Foot, who, like him, was constantly in the enemy's lines, though, unlike him, always in uniform. Colquhoun Grant's gifts as a linguist and his talent for making friends with the peasants rendered him invaluable ; but he narrowly missed capture by General Foy in Caçeres in March 1810, escaping half-dressed and leaving his horse and his papers behind him.<sup>2</sup> Equally enterprising and not less useful was Waters of the Eleventh Foot ; while Mellish of the Tenth Hussars, a dandy, a gambler, a fine draughtsman and a magnificent rider across country, distinguished himself by extreme daring of reconnaissance.<sup>3</sup> Hardly less important in this same province was Captain Somers Cocks of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, who,

<sup>1</sup> Grant to Milit. Sec., 20th April 1810 ; Grant to Wellington, 27th Jan. 1810. *Wellington MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Girod de l'Ain, *Vie du General Foy*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Mellish was sent home before the end of the war, apparently, because he could not keep himself from gambling, a vice which Wellington could not endure.

1810. working generally with an escort and troopers of his own regiment, was unmatched in vigilance and sagacity of observation, and unwearied in the search for intelligence. Last, but by no means least, there was a certain mysterious Captain Rumann, a German, of the old Ninety-seventh Foot, who wandered about chiefly between the Douro and Salamanca, and contrived to send excellent information to headquarters.

Every one of these gentlemen corresponded immediately with Wellington; and, though Cocks sometimes sent in his reports to the Quartermaster-general or to the General commanding the cavalry division, he generally addressed and despatched them, no doubt by order, direct to the Commander-in-Chief. It is probable that these officers enjoyed more of Wellington's confidence than any others; certainly far more than the very able men, chiefly Engineers such as John Burgoyne, who were employed in the work of examining the country. These made their reports through their chiefs to the Quartermaster-general; and, though that officer issued the orders for every march, yet it is evident that topography was the chief business of his department. It is very remarkable that not one of the thousands of letters sent in to Wellington during his campaigns bears on it the day, much less the hour, of receipt.

As regards the divisional generals, Wellington complained, not without good reason, in December 1809 that no army had ever been so ill-provided as his. Sherbrooke was incapacitated for further work by ill-health; Mackenzie had been killed at Talavera; Alexander Campbell had been disabled for the time at the same action; Cotton had very reluctantly been obliged to go home on leave to look after his private affairs upon the death of his father.<sup>1</sup> Thus of the divisional generals there remained only Hill and

<sup>1</sup> Cotton to Wellington, 29th Nov. 1809. *Wellington MSS.* Cotton explained that most of his father's estate had dropped out of lease through his death and could not be released without the arrival of the heir in England.

Craufurd. Of the Brigadiers, Langwerth had been killed and Henry Campbell disabled by wounds, while Tilson's health was so much impaired by fever that in April he too was obliged to ask for leave of absence.<sup>1</sup> Altogether, out of fifteen generals of brigade and division seven had been slain or disabled; for whom Wellington had received in return but three generals, one of them being Lowry Cole, who was very good, and another General Slade, a cavalry officer, who cannot be described in terms so flattering. Wellington therefore asked for more, naming Generals Dyott, Leith, Picton, Meade, Houston and Nightingall as those whom he should select. One and all of them had seen much service; and two of them, Leith and Nightingall, will be remembered as having already made some mark in the Peninsula. But Meade was already employed; and Wellington, for some reason, doubted whether Houston and Nightingall would consent to come. As a matter of fact both were appointed to join him in the course of 1810, though Dyott refused. A principal difficulty in the choice of generals was that Beresford, as Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese forces and as local Lieutenant-general, claimed, not unreasonably, seniority over all British Major-generals whose troops might be attached to his army. Now Sherbrooke, Cotton, Hill and John Murray were all senior to Beresford in the British service; and Murray, as we have seen, had gone home sooner than submit to serve under him, with the object of representing, not on his own behalf only, but on behalf of Hill and Cotton also, the grievance under which they conceived themselves to suffer. The whole question was one of great difficulty, and it is not surprising to find that all the generals named by Wellington were junior to Beresford. As an after-thought he added a request that no violent party men might be sent to him. "We must keep the spirit of

<sup>1</sup> Tilson to Milit. Sec., 7th April, 1810. *Wellington MSS.*



1810. party out of the Army," he wrote, "or we shall be in a bad way indeed."<sup>1</sup>

It will be convenient to depart from strict chronological order and to state that the difficulty was finally solved by the despatch to Portugal from England in the course of the year 1810 of Lieutenant-general Sir Brent Spencer; Major-generals Leith, Sir William Erskine, Picton and Houston; and Brigadiers Andrew Hay, Lumley, Colville and Dunlop, the last-named to supersede Lightburne. Of these, Sir Brent Spencer was appointed expressly to be Wellington's second in command, being one of three officers suggested by him for the post. Of the other two, Graham had already been sent to Cadiz; while Lord William Bentinck, who was senior to Spencer, was actually selected by the Horse Guards for employment with the army of Portugal in August 1809, but declined, fearing not without reason that Graham might come to Portugal from Cadiz and supersede him. Edward Paget, who was also approached by Government, refused on account of the state of his health.<sup>2</sup> Spencer, therefore, was sent out in default of any better man, and was welcomed as highly acceptable by Wellington, who had written in commendation of his behaviour during the campaign of 1808, and had actually invited him to serve with his army at the beginning of 1809. Spencer had regretfully declined the offer at the time, upon the ground of ill-health; and it may be that his sickness had impaired his ability, for Wellington, as we shall see, later declared him to be quite unfit for his situation. Leith was named by Wellington from actual experience of his efficiency. Picton he chose, curiously enough, upon a recommendation which the Venezuelan adven-

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 21st Dec. 1809, 2nd Jan. 1810. Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 29th May 1809. *Londonderry MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Dilkes's appointment was reported to Wellington by the A.G. on 24th Feb. 1810. He went to Cadiz. Lumley and Hay arrived in Lisbon on 17th of September (*Wellington MSS.*), Leith some time earlier. Lightburne was recalled, after a good many complaints from Wellington, on 19th Sept. 1810.

turer, Francisco Miranda,<sup>1</sup> had made to him when Chief Secretary for Ireland ; and it needed some courage in Wellington to give a chance to Picton, who was still mercilessly persecuted by his enemies on account of the old scandal at Trinidad. Houston, who had seen a great many campaigns in the West Indies, in Egypt, and finally at Walcheren, was probably known to Wellington by report only ; but it should seem that he was not very anxious to join the army in the Peninsula, for he did not come out until early in 1811. Colville was seized upon by Torrens, the Adjutant-general at the Horse Guards, within a fortnight after his return from the West Indies, as an officer of good reputation. Dunlop had much experience of war in India and had led one of the assaulting columns at Seringapatam in 1799, so that he was no stranger to Wellington. Erskine was selected by Sir David Dundas, who had formed a high opinion of him during his service in Germany. "No doubt," wrote Torrens, "he is sometimes a little mad, but in his lucid intervals he is an uncommonly clever fellow ; and I trust he may have no fit during the campaign, though he looked a little wild before he embarked. Sir David Dundas . . . thinks that some of our Generals would not be the worse for a little of his madness." Unfortunately, as shall be seen, Erskine's insanity proved to be only too real. Lastly, we come to Lumley, who once again had been chosen by the Horse Guards, chiefly upon the recommendation of Colonel Henry Bunbury, who had given an excellent account of his services in the Mediterranean. Wellington had set his face so strongly against Lumley as a man of no intellect that Torrens was fain to apologise for the appointment. "I never thought him a clever man," wrote the Adjutant-general, "but he is zealous, active, obedient, and as brave as a lion. He is not intended by nature for anything bigger than a brigade ; but that, it is generally thought, he will do well." The

<sup>1</sup> Miranda had met Picton in Trinidad when filibustering on the coast of Venezuela.

1810. truth is that the Horse Guards was at its wits' end to find efficient officers for the higher commands, and Torrens was fain to make excuses for the fact. "Remember," he wrote to Wellington, "that we have not the most choice set to select Lieutenant-generals from."<sup>1</sup>

The relations upon which Wellington stood with his Generals seem to have been governed mainly by social considerations. Old friends, like Beresford, Hill, Cotton and Mackenzie,<sup>2</sup> he addressed always by their surnames, "My dear Beresford," and so forth; but Beresford alone addressed him as "My dear Wellesley." After Wellington had been raised to the peerage, no one used a more familiar address to him than "My dear Lord;"<sup>3</sup> and from the end of 1809 onwards he appears to have held the whole of his subordinates at rather greater distance than before. Possibly the reason for this was a very sharp passage of arms with Beresford, which took place in December 1809, and in which Wellington used language so severe that his colleague threatened to resign. The subject at issue is obscure, for only Beresford's side of the correspondence seems to exist, and the quarrel was speedily composed; but there are indications that the Marshal in some way called Wellington's authority in question. However that may be, Wellington never wrote to Craufurd or Picton with such freedom as to Cotton or Hill, or even as to Cole. He never addressed them more

<sup>1</sup> Liverpool to Wellington, 4th May; Wellington to Liverpool, 23rd May 1810. *Wellington MSS.* Brent Spencer to Wellington, 30th March 1809; Milit. Sec. Horse Guards to Wellington, 18th Aug. 1809. Torrens to Wellington (private) 11th, 19th Sept. 1810. Stanhope's *Conversations of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 68. *Royal Military Calendar*. Leveson-Gower, of unenviable notoriety since the failure at Buenos Ayres, wrote to Wellington on 20th July 1810, expressing anxiety to serve under him. I can find no answer to this application, but if one were sent, its purport is not difficult to conjecture.

<sup>2</sup> The Mackenzie who was killed at Talavera.

<sup>3</sup> I find that on one occasion General Stopford of the Guards used the form "Dear Lord Wellington."

familiarly than as "My dear General," nor did they <sup>1810.</sup> presume to address him except as "My Lord." In the case of Picton, his aloofness is easily explained by the fact that the leader of the Third Division was a rough, coarse, foul-mouthed man, who was apparently inclined to treat his chief with familiarity. The case of Robert Craufurd was less simple than that of Picton. Knowing his value for certain purposes, which shall presently be specified, Wellington always humoured him and treated him with exceptional consideration, as a man five years older than himself; but none the less, kept him always at arm's length. Craufurd's temper was fiendish and his instincts tyrannical. Before he had been with the army six months complaint reached the Horse Guards of his unusual severity to the men; and looking to the accounts which we possess of some of his outbursts of rage, the fact is hardly surprising.<sup>1</sup> A man who in every fit of passion forgot that he was a gentleman, who was always trying to push himself forward, who to that end would disobey any order, and who needed constant watching lest from pure egoism he should lead his troops into peril, was not one whom Wellington was likely to admit to intimacy.

As to the army at large, Wellington at the end of 1809 declared it to be better than it had been, but still stigmatised the behaviour of the men as infamous. When with their regiments they conducted themselves well, but when detached or on their way to rejoin their corps from hospital<sup>2</sup> they committed every description of

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Calvert (Horse Guards) to Wellington, 5th Jan. 1810. Sir David Dundas gave Wellington very properly to understand that he received any such reports with great caution, and merely passed them on for his information without prejudice to Craufurd. For one of Craufurd's outbursts, see the account of his behaviour when his baggage-cart was accidentally lost on the retreat from the Tagus. Sept. 1809. *British Rifleman*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> The base hospital was at Belem, just outside Lisbon, and the number of skulkers and marauders that issued from it gave rise to a generic term in the army, "the Belem Rangers."

1810. outrage. They would rob the British convoys or the Portuguese peasants with absolute impartiality, and did not stick at murder from mere lust of destruction. The country people occasionally avenged themselves with the knife, but more often forgot their grievance in a day or two, and would not give evidence against the men who had come to defend their fatherland. Hence the offenders, if tried, were acquitted; their comrades perjured themselves to save them; and Wellington renewed his complaints of the reforms which had ruined the efficiency of regimental courts-martial. Concurrently arose a crime, which hitherto had been almost unknown in the army, namely desertion to the enemy in the field. These deserters were principally Irishmen; and Wellington ascribed the prevalence of this offence in great measure to the bad character of the men drafted into the army from the Irish Militia, and to the example of certain stragglers from Moore's force, who had deserted to the French and deserted back to the British after an interval spent in brigandage.<sup>1</sup> It is certain that Irish soldiers, if taken prisoners, needed little persuasion to accept service with the French, unless by chance there were a compatriot at hand to warn them that the hardship and suffering in the French army far exceeded that in the British.<sup>2</sup> The inferior quality of the recruits from the Militia was accounted for in turn by the fact that, whereas the wives of militiamen received an allowance for the support of themselves and their children, no such allowance was granted to the wives of regular soldiers; so that militiamen of good character were averse from enlisting in the army. Wellington had much correspondence with Torrens as to the expediency of continuing this grant to soldiers enlisted from the Militia, though Torrens had little faith in it; and, as

<sup>1</sup> Morvan (*Le Soldat Imperial*, i. 94) says that more than a thousand British prisoners, who had entered the French service, deserted in 1810.

<sup>2</sup> See Blayney's *Narrative*, etc., i. 238-239.

we shall see, the difficulty was met in 1811 by abolishing, except in rare instances, the allowance to the wives and families of militiamen. But this, after all, was a matter which affected the quality of the troops, not the discipline of the army; and, though Wellington complained that in the second battalions, which were under his command, the non-commissioned officers were bad, and the subalterns not much better, the peculiar failings of the British troops in the Peninsula have never been satisfactorily explained.

As to desertion, it was common enough in the wars of William the Third and of Marlborough, but we hear nothing of such general misconduct as that described by Wellington. There is no parallel to it in the long wars in North America nor in the more recent campaigns—the only ones of any continuity since 1793—of the Duke of York in Flanders. There is but one way, that I can think of, in which it can be accounted for, namely that the British soldier, then an exceedingly drunken creature, found himself for the first time in a land flowing with wine.<sup>1</sup> It will be objected that he had visited it before in Queen Anne's time; but it must be remembered on the other hand that in the War of the Spanish Succession the population was hostile to him. Now it was friendly; and liquor was to be bought or stolen everywhere. Hence an eternal craving for the means to procure wine, which was satisfied by every description of robbery, plunder, and intimidation, and when sated was frequently followed by the wanton violence and brutality of the drunkard. No doubt the example of Moore's stragglers encouraged others to take the evil way; and the powerlessness of courts-martial made that example doubly tempting. In the West Indies new rum offered probably even

<sup>1</sup> "No soldier can withstand the temptation of wine. This is constantly before their eyes in this country, and they are constantly intoxicated when absent from their regiments, and there is no crime which they do not commit to obtain money to purchase it, or, if they cannot get money, to obtain it by force." Wellington to Torrens, 2nd Nov. 1810.

1810. greater attractions than the wine of Spain or Portugal ; but marauding is a severe exertion in a tropical climate, and new rum with yellow fever at its back kills men before they can do much mischief ; otherwise perhaps British troops there might have been as ungovernable as those of Moore and Wellington. But in the Peninsula men could drink and live to drink more ; and when wine was stored in vast quantities, as at Bembibre, it was impossible to maintain control of the soldiers. In 1812 the Light Division was quartered near large wine-vaults, and every man, from the divisional general downwards, was drunk for twenty-four hours and more.<sup>1</sup> It seems to me, therefore, that liquor lay at the root of the army's indiscipline ; and the danger was the more formidable inasmuch as it could be neither banished nor evaded. It haunted Wellington night and day. "These terrible continued outrages," he wrote, "give me reason to apprehend that, notwithstanding all the precautions I have taken and shall take, the men will slip through my fingers, as they did through Sir John Moore's, when I shall be involved in any nice operation with a powerful enemy in my front."<sup>2</sup>

As regards the officers at large, Wellington's main complaint was that the power of reward, granted hitherto to every Commander-in-Chief in the field, was denied to him ; wherefore it was impossible for him to stimulate their zeal and energy. Strong though were his remonstrances upon this point, Sir David Dundas was so jealous of his patronage at the Horse Guards that he would make no concession ; and, as shall in due time be seen, it was left to the Duke of York under the impulse of Torrens to set matters right. It may be said generally that, though Torrens always worked strenuously to ease Wellington's task, old Sir David was uniformly obstructive. It was vain for Wellington to plead on behalf of a deserving old

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith*, i. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 24th Jan. ; to Torrens, 2nd Nov. 1810.

officer, such as Alexander Campbell, and for Torrens<sup>1810.</sup> to second him with all his power: "Old Pivot" was inexorable. He based his opinion rigidly upon the letter of the regulations and would not be moved; and Wellington complained that he invariably dealt with men as if they were stocks or stones.<sup>1</sup> Another difficulty was that the senior regimental officers of all grades were constantly passing, upon promotion, from battalions abroad to battalions at home, so that there was a continual tendency towards the supplanting of experienced by inexperienced men. Again, many officers—and the generals were among the worst offenders—seemed to think that they were entitled, after the fashion of Marlborough's day, to go home on leave at the close of the autumn, to abandon their men to take care of themselves during the winter, and to reappear at the opening of the next campaign. It cost Wellington some sharp language to check this practice until public opinion in England came to his rescue.

All these evils, however, were remediable and, in due course, remedied. Not so was another more signal defect, which apparently was treated by Wellington as beyond hope. Craufurd, judging from the quality of his own excellent Light Brigade, had recommended the substitution of light tin camp-kettles for the heavy iron ones that were actually used. "In a regiment well looked after," answered Wellington, "it is certain that the tin kettles would answer best, as the officers would oblige the soldiers to take care of them. . . . But in two-thirds of the regiments of the Army such care would not be taken; and whether the regiments would have kettles or not would depend upon that most thoughtless of animals, the soldier himself, and I should very soon hear that there were none." This is plain testimony to the fact that two-thirds of the officers

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Castlereagh, 25th Aug.; to Brig.-Gen. Alex. Campbell, 4th Sept. 1809; Torrens to Wellington, 20th Jan. 1810. *Wellington MSS.*



1810. could not be trusted to discharge one of their commonest and most important duties. Add to this failing a pernicious habit of writing home criticism of their commanders, and exact details of military preparations to their friends, which the said friends frequently sent to the newspapers, and it will be seen that the British officers, taken as a body, had yet much to learn about their profession.

Turning next to the medical service, we find reiterated complaints of the lack of surgeons; the dearth of medical men being such that the sick could only with difficulty be moved from the Guadiana into Portugal. The head of the medical department, however, Dr. Frank, was so highly zealous and efficient that Wellington could thoroughly trust him; though he was hardly of the calibre of the true father of the Army Medical Corps, Dr. M'Grigor, who joined the Peninsular army in 1811.

In the matter of the Commissariat, things were not yet in a thoroughly satisfactory condition. The service, as we have seen, had not worked smoothly during the past campaign, and friction between generals and commissaries had been frequent. Undoubtedly many of the latter had been extremely incapable, but on the contrary one, Mr. Ogilvie, had been discovered, who possessed a perfect genius for his business; while beyond all question the difficulties of the department were enormous. It was Wellington's strict rule that no corps should join the army until first equipped with regimental transport; and it was the habit of the Commandant at Lisbon first to warn the officers that they must not depend upon the Commissariat for mules, and next to stimulate them by promising that the battalion soonest equipped with transport should be the first to march to the front. But mules were scarce, and the local dealers were greedy; and matters generally ended by the officers throwing themselves upon the Commissariat—a call which could not easily be ignored when a man of peremptory disposition, such as

Craufurd, was in question.<sup>1</sup> The Horse Guards did 1810. their best to help matters by sending out continually men and waggons of the Waggon-train; but, though the men were most serviceable, there were very few roads in Portugal which were not too narrow for the vehicles, so that it was necessary to send them home again. In Portugal the authorities were averse from permitting even waggons to leave their districts; and the Commissary in despair was fain to send to Tangier both for mules and oxen. Happily this resource proved to be successful in the matter of mules,<sup>2</sup> but the anxiety in the meanwhile must have been very serious. By November 1809 that much-tried man, Commissary-general Murray, was quite broken down, his staff being reduced to one-half by sickness; and he was obliged to ask for leave of absence, finally departing in June 1810, with a very handsome tribute from Wellington to his good service. He was succeeded by Commissary-general Kennedy, who likewise earned high encomiums from his chief; but it should seem that the organisation of the service of transport and supply had not reached in 1810 the perfection to which it attained a year later.

From the British I pass to the Portuguese forces, the remaking of which had been entrusted to Beresford in 1809. The old Portuguese army had been virtually dissolved after Junot's invasion of 1808, and was no great loss, since the officers for the most part were absolutely incompetent, and the men in consequence ill-trained and undisciplined. Could Beresford have begun his work with a free hand and, so to speak, with a clean sheet before him, his task would have been

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Col. Peacocke to Wellington, 5th July 1809. Craufurd only succeeded in bringing his brigade up to Talavera by taking commissariat-mules for his officers, whereas those officers ought by right to have supplied themselves. Doubtless he was wise in his generation; but it was not fair to the Commissaries, who had more work than they could do.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Murray, 7th Sept.; to Admiral Berkeley, 28th Sept. 1809; 22nd Jan., 6th March 1810.

1810. infinitely easier ; but unfortunately the Regency had anticipated him by restoring the old corps and pouring thousands of conscripts into them. In this way many of the old school of useless officers were recalled to service, who naturally obstructed active reforms and yet prevented the rise of younger and more competent men. As raw material for soldiers the Portuguese peasants are excellent, fine sturdy men in body, orderly and docile in character ;<sup>1</sup> but they, equally with all classes of the population, are prone to indolence, and the traditions of the old army were in this respect as bad as they could be. Moreover, in the army, and indeed in every branch of the administration, there was an extreme reluctance in all men of lower than noble rank to displease their social superiors, the *fidalgos*. A single lazy noble in a battalion almost sufficed, therefore, to injure the efficiency of the whole of it. Moreover, even the younger and more promising officers required teaching, as well as constant spurring to do their duty ; and altogether Beresford deemed it impossible to make anything of the Portuguese army unless every regiment possessed an English field-officer and at least two English captains.

Such a decision, though doubtless wise, could not but cause jealousy directly in the Portuguese, and indirectly in the British service. There was little temptation to British officers to enter the Portuguese army. Beresford himself received the command chiefly because no general officer of higher rank would accept it ; and, accordingly, it was necessary to offer to every British officer a step of promotion in the British army, and a further step in the Portuguese army upon his joining the latter. In plain words a British captain became at a bound a British major and a Portuguese lieutenant-colonel, with the natural result that other British majors,

<sup>1</sup> I have never encountered people more civil, obliging, and well-mannered than the Portuguese in the country districts. I found them far more so than any Spaniards with whom I had to do when wandering over the battlefields of the Peninsula.

his seniors in King George's service, resented the possibility of having to serve under his orders. The point was extremely difficult, for Portuguese commissions had been served out to British officers in the most capricious manner, juniors being placed arbitrarily over the heads of seniors in a fashion which disgusted and dissatisfied all. Moreover, though Wellington freely recognised the right of the Portuguese Regency to be jealous of the honour of its commissions, he was keenly alive to the injustice of placing British officers, who were only temporarily attached to the Portuguese army, in permanent authority over their superiors in the British service, whenever the two armies should act together in the field. The question gave rise to much anxious correspondence between Wellington, the British Minister at Lisbon, Beresford, and the Horse Guards ; but after a few months the excitement over it died away, and the British officers in both services settled down to live together in peace. Beresford, with great tact, made it a rule that no British subaltern should serve in the Portuguese army, so as to encourage young gentlemen of the country to seek commissions. He also contrived that a certain number of Portuguese officers should retain high command, placing British officers immediately under them, in case they should need guidance, and generally arranging that whenever an officer of the one nation stood first, his second should be of the other. Finally Wellington, after many struggles, succeeded in raising the status and quality of the Portuguese officers by obtaining for them an increase of pay.

The next question was to decide as to the training of the Portuguese, and this was solved at once by the introduction of the British discipline. British drill-sergeants were employed ; Dundas's drill-book was translated, and British words of command and bugle-calls were introduced ;<sup>1</sup> and it need hardly be added

<sup>1</sup> The British bugle-calls are retained in the Portuguese army to this day ; a fact which was practically brought home to me in my stay at Guarda, which I entered late in the evening to the sound of

1810. that this uniformity of system and of movement contributed greatly towards the facility of handling the troops of the two armies. All these changes necessarily were not made nor perfected in a day nor in a year ; but none the less Wellington, after inspecting fifteen Portuguese regiments in the first week of January 1810, reported very favourably as to their progress and condition, though the numbers in the ranks at large left much to be desired.<sup>1</sup> The nominal establishment of the Portuguese army was fifty-six thousand men, but Wellington stated it at forty-five thousand ; namely, thirty-six thousand infantry, three thousand *caçadores*, or light infantry, as many cavalry, and as many artillery ; and of this total in February 1810 not above twenty thousand were fit and ready for the field. In addition to these there was the militia, nominally seventy thousand strong, and organised into forty-eight regiments, but at the same date counting little more than fifty thousand men, three-fifths of them unarmed. The value of this militia was very uncertain, for it depended for its numbers upon magistrates who were frequently unwilling and incapable, and for its training upon officers who were for the most part ignorant and perfunctory. None the less it could serve to hold fortified places against sudden attack, and to harass small parties and convoys of the enemy. Lastly there was the *ordenança*, or statutory levy *en masse*, including ostensibly every able-bodied peasant between the ages of sixteen and sixty, who were supposed to be enrolled, according to local grouping, into companies of two hundred and fifty, and were armed with such weapons as they could produce. This *ordenança* was a survival of mediæval times, and for fighting purposes was useless ; but it was an invariable custom that, when called out, it should devastate the country, so that an invading enemy should find in it no

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the British "First Post," played, however, at Portuguese speed, *lentissimo*.

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 4 Jan., 22nd Feb. 1810.

supplies and be compelled to fall back. In fact it was 1810. an organisation for the process known as "driving the country," which had been prescribed by the military authorities for England both in 1780 and in 1803, but had been abandoned. For this reason, apparently, Wellington decided that this levy also should be summoned for the final defence of Portugal.<sup>1</sup>

It must, however, be observed that the chief difficulty in the Portuguese army, and indeed in Portugal at large, was that of money. The British Government had early decided to take first ten and then twenty thousand Portuguese soldiers into its pay; but their wants could not be satisfied with mere wages. They needed to be fed, clothed and armed; and, even if food were forthcoming at the hands of the Portuguese authorities, which, as shall be seen, was by no means always the case, arms, equipment and clothing could only be obtained from England, and, in the disorganised state of the country, paid for by English money. To all intent this signified that the war could not be carried on by the Portuguese at all except by the help of an English subsidy; and this, in its turn, meant that the British Government, through its military and civil agents, not unreasonably demanded, in virtue of such subsidy, a dominant voice in the direction of Portuguese affairs at large. It becomes necessary, therefore, at this point to examine the relations of Wellington both with the Portuguese Government and with his own.

The Portuguese Regency until 1810 continued to include the same members as had been appointed by Sir Hew Dalrymple, but was now reduced by various causes to three persons, the Patriarch of Oporto, the Marquis de Olhão and the Marquis das Minas, men with little ability or inclination to end existing abuses. Their secretary, however, Dom Miguel Forjaz, was steadily on the other side, working in concert with the British with a heartiness and intelligence which, con-

<sup>1</sup> Liverpool to Wellington, 15th Dec. 1809; Wellington to Liverpool, 14th Nov. 1809, 22nd Feb. 1810. Oman iii. 171-184.

1810. sidering his nationality, his difficulties, and the times in which he lived, were beyond all praise. The British nation has never, I think, fairly acknowledged the help which she received, in spite of occasional shortcomings, from the loyalty and the indefatigable industry of Dom Miguel. His superiors, however, were jealous of the British, jealous of each other, and, not without excuse, afraid of the Regency in Brazil. The energetic proceedings of Beresford in respect of the army, of Mr. Villiers in regard to the administration, and above all, of Wellington in stirring up everybody and everything, were extremely distasteful to them; and they met all representations and remonstrances with active intrigue in private, and in public with passive but embarrassing obstruction. They must not be too harshly judged. They were men of high position, who had no quarrel with the old order of inefficiency and corruption, and had probably never dreamed of anything different from it; wherefore it is easy to understand how, with their narrow views, limited intelligence, deep-seated prejudices and meridional indolence, they resented bitterly the intrusion of cold, strenuous and peremptory foreigners.

Nor, as has been hinted, did the Prince Regent in Brazil help matters. The chief minister there was Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, Count of Linhares, one of whose brothers, Domingos, was Portuguese minister in London, and another, José, known as the Principal de Sousa, a leader of the opponents of the French in Lisbon. The three brothers were one and all ambitious of power; and at the end of September 1809 a letter arrived in Lisbon from Rio de Janeiro which hinted at a change of government, obviously, as the sequel showed, in the direction of adding new members to the Regency, among whom the Principal was to be included.<sup>1</sup> This letter arrived at a bad moment. Mr. Villiers had just been recalled, to Wellington's great regret, to England; though as a matter of fact he did not depart until some months later. Beresford and Wellington were just be-

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Beresford, 5th Oct. 1809.

coming very urgent over the condition and subsistence of the Portuguese army; Portugal at large was threatened with scarcity of provisions; her soldiers were starving; and the English subsidy had been found to be utterly insufficient for its purpose. Not unnaturally the Regency ascribed the letter from Rio to the intrigues of the British and Forjaz, and became sulkier and more helpless than ever. Thus, for instance, Wellington pointed out a favourable opportunity for the cheap purchase of wheat. The Regency rejected his advice, and proposed instead that the burden of feeding the Portuguese army should be transferred from the *Junta de Viveres*, or Portuguese Commissariat, to Beresford. Wellington, after a few words of scornful comment, bought the wheat, and some weeks later, when the Regency was at its wits' end, threw his purchase contemptuously to them as though to a parcel of naughty but repentant children. It must be confessed that the behaviour of the Regency, judged by the standard of British administration, might be called childish; but it cannot be said that the tone and method of Wellington were conciliatory. Still, the times were full of difficulty; the weight of responsibility which lay upon the Commander-in-Chief was very heavy, and large allowance must be made for him, as for all parties.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1810 Mr. Villiers left Lisbon, and was succeeded as minister by Mr. Charles Stuart, whom we have already seen in Spain during the operations of Sir John Moore. He was an able and resolute man, whose good service during the Peninsular War is not easily overrated. At the outset he was confronted with an incident which, in the hands of an unwise diplomatist, might have led to serious consequences. The Marquis das Minas after some weeks of secession resigned his place in the Regency; and it became a question whether a new member or members should be appointed by the survivors in his place. Wellington was firmly against

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Beresford, 5th Oct. 1809; to Forjaz, 27th Dec. 1809; to Villiers, 25th Jan., 30th Jan., 7th Feb. 1810.



1810. anything of the kind. The Regency, he contended, derived all its authority from the Prince Regent in Brazil, and any effort to set up a government independently of that authority would be fatal; therefore, though the Patriarch might devote all his powers of folly and mischief to the thwarting of Forjaz and of the British, the evil must be borne with. The opinion was thoroughly characteristic of Wellington, who preferred a legitimately constituted government, however obstructive, to the most able and complaisant that might be set up by revolutionary methods. We shall see that the Prince Regent within a few months added members to the Regency whose appointment was in the highest degree displeasing to the British General; but Wellington was consistent to his principle. The true sovereign of Portugal had chosen them, and therefore they must be accepted. He and Stuart thus resigned themselves to make the best of a bad state of things. It is true that they put every description of legitimate pressure upon the Regency, not sparing plain words, and exerting every lawful effort to bring about useful changes in its constitution. But, no matter how great the provocation, beyond this they would not go; and the fact must be recorded to the credit of their patience in action, if not of their moderation in language. After all, they were fortunate at least in having a coadjutor so loyal and able as Forjaz. "I am quite convinced," wrote Wellington, "that he is the only man in Portugal fit for the situation which he fills." It was well both for England and for Portugal not only that such a man was at hand, but that he possessed the courage to hold his place and to work with the British, undaunted by the intrigues and the hostility of his more jealous and less capable countrymen.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now turn to the question of the Portuguese subsidy, which will lead us to the still larger matter of Wellington's relations with his own Government.

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Stuart, 17th March, 8th, 28th April, 24th June 1810.

Originally, as has been told, the British Ministers had 1810. agreed to take first ten thousand and later twenty thousand Portuguese troops into their pay; but, for reasons that have been already stated, it was very soon found that the estimate of £50,000 a month, which had been put forward by Wellington as late as at the end of September 1809, was quite insufficient. The resources of Portugal being hopelessly unequal to the demands of her military force, it was necessary that the funds should be supplied by England, and moreover, supplied for the most part in specie, which was hardly obtainable. Wellington was extremely exacting upon this point, and appeared to think that the failure of the British Government to furnish coin was due in great measure to its own perversity. In vain Huskisson, the greatest living authority upon the subject in England, represented that he and his colleagues were utterly at a loss to find gold or silver without help from the Spanish treasure-ships. "How," he wrote privately with some temper, "can you expect us to buy specie here with the exchange thirty per cent against us, and guineas selling at twenty-four shillings?"<sup>1</sup> The General was not to be pacified. He had observed that coin was always obtainable for bills in Lisbon after the arrival of the English packet; from which he drew the perfectly correct inference that there was a regular traffic in specie between England and Portugal. The coin made its way, in fact, to the place where there was the most profitable market for it, and would not be diverted by all the efforts of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Bank of England. Wellington apparently declined to accept this fact, and vented his vexation in contemptuous observations, constantly repeated, that the Government had undertaken in the Peninsula a task which was beyond its means to execute. "It will," he wrote, at the close of one of his early appeals for money, "be better for Government in every view of the subject to relinquish their operations in Portugal

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Huskisson to Wellington, 19th July 1809.

1810. and Spain, if the country cannot afford to carry them on.”<sup>1</sup>

None the less did he strenuously urge Ministers to increasing expenditure, first for raising the pay of the Portuguese officers; next for taking additional Portuguese soldiers into British pay, making thirty thousand in all; and finally for their subsistence and equipment during the coming campaigns. In November he announced a deficit of £900,000 in the Portuguese accounts, towards the relief of which he proposed that Government should grant £300,000. “If I had asked for the £900,000, I should not have got a shilling,” he wrote to Villiers in defence of this proceeding, “and I think it more than probable that I shall get the £300,000, besides the pay for the officers.” Pursuant to his expectations, Ministers agreed to increase the Portuguese subsidy to £980,000 annually, as he had recommended, declining to be responsible for the deficit; and Wellington urged the Portuguese Regency to make the most of this concession. “I am positively certain,” he wrote to Charles Stuart in March 1810, “that the Ministers will be unwilling to go to Parliament to ask for more money for Portugal, and that Parliament will not grant a larger sum even if Ministers should ask for it. . . . I am positively certain, as above stated, that Government will not give them another shilling; and I think you will do well to discourage the notion that the Portuguese should get more.” None the less additional demands were put forward on behalf of Portugal; and the British Ministry, so far from refusing to entertain them, agreed in April 1810 to increase the subsidy to a million and a half, giving notice, however, that they could not send much of it in the form of specie from England.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Huskisson, 28th March, 22nd June; to Villiers, 21st June, 21st Aug. 1809; 6th, 14th Jan. 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 14th Nov.; to Villiers, 6th Dec.; Liverpool to Wellington, 15th Dec. 1809; Wellington to Stuart, 3rd March 1810; Liverpool to Wellington, 24th April 1810. This last letter is among the *Wellington MSS.*, unprinted.

So far, therefore, as financial support is concerned, 1810. it does not appear that Wellington's complaints against Ministers were well founded. Nor, it must be added, does he seem rightly to have appreciated their difficulties. Whether through some pardonable omissions on the part of Villiers, or to such misunderstanding as is almost inevitable in the like circumstances, the Cabinet was unquestionably taken by surprise at the enormous cost of the war in the Peninsula. It did not realise—nor, I think, can any one realise who has not seen the country—the stupendous difficulty and consequently the abnormal expense, of the service of transport and supply. Wellington continually complained, and with truth, that everybody came to him for everything; but he omitted to mention that most of these requirements reduced themselves to a question of money, and were practically thrown by him in his turn upon Ministers. Perceval admitted frankly that if he had foreseen in the winter of 1809 the demands that would be made upon the Treasury in 1810, he would never have dared to sanction the continuance of the war upon the scale which it actually attained, from sheer inability to supply funds to support it. He acquitted Wellington, however, of all blame, and confessed to him in private that he rejoiced in his own blindness, for he had since been convinced that the expenditure was necessary and unavoidable. None the less, with Wellington's letters before us, it is difficult to see how Perceval could have conjectured that the annual cost of the war in the Peninsula would spring at one bound from three to five millions. That the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have accepted such an increase, not indeed without some inward dismay, but without repining and with emphatic declaration of his confidence in the General upon the spot, seems to me no common example of a Minister's loyalty towards his subordinate.<sup>1</sup>

But when we turn to Wellington's relations with Government upon the question of reinforcements, we

<sup>1</sup> Walpole's *Life of Spencer Perceval*, ii. 129-133.

1810. perceive how admirably deserving he was of such loyalty. We have seen<sup>1</sup> that Wellington on the 14th of November had undertaken to defend Portugal in any event with his existing force, and declared his conviction that even after defeat he could safely embark his troops. He pointed out, however, that by his existing force he meant "an efficient operating army" of thirty thousand men, or, making allowance for the sick, who had been numerous in the unhealthy cantonments of the Guadiana,<sup>2</sup> and for the garrison for the Castle of Lisbon, thirty-five thousand men in all. By thirty-five thousand men he signified, what is too often forgotten, thirty-five thousand rank and file, exclusive of artillery, or roughly forty thousand of all ranks of infantry and cavalry, besides two to three thousand gunners. Mr. Villiers, to whom he had communicated the purport of his despatch, took him to task for not demanding ten thousand men more. Wellington freely admitted that forty thousand men were better than thirty thousand, but reminded Villiers of the enormous difficulties of Ministers in furnishing men and money. "With the knowledge of these facts," he added, "would it be fair, or indeed honest, in me to ask for a man more than I thought absolutely necessary for my purpose?" There spoke the ideal public servant, who remembers that he is only one out of many who are working for their country.<sup>3</sup>

Liverpool, it is satisfactory to note, met Wellington in a like spirit. The General had asked for five thousand men: the Minister undertook to send them, and one regiment of dragoons in addition to them.<sup>4</sup> By

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, pp. 336-337.

<sup>2</sup> The returns of the 8th November showed 9100 sick and wounded out of 33,000 rank and file, exclusive of 2161 artillery.

<sup>3</sup> Wellington to Villiers, 6th Dec. 1809, 14th Jan. 1810. *Wellington MSS.* Villiers to Wellington, 3rd Dec. 1809, 9th Jan. 1810.

<sup>4</sup> The first instalment of these reinforcements consisted of—

74th, 650 ; 1/79th, 900 ; 94th, 650	= 2200
Drafts of 11th, 40th, 57th, 61st	= 1200

the 1st of January the greater part of these troops <sup>1810.</sup> were embarked; and the remainder, together with twelve hundred remounts, were only awaiting their transports. But, as we have seen, the first reinforcement upon its arrival at the end of January was at once sent on to Cadiz; and it was necessary for Liverpool to make good immediately the loss to the army in Portugal. Owing to the ravages of Walcheren fever this was a matter of great difficulty; but none the less Liverpool scraped together three more battalions, which, with the addition of drafts, made up a total of some twenty-four hundred men sent from England to Portugal in February.<sup>1</sup> This reinforcement was in great part of inferior quality; but though, owing to the demands of Cadiz already mentioned, Liverpool could furnish nothing better, he by no means thought that he had fulfilled his duty when he had despatched it. On the 24th of April he reviewed the whole situation in a letter to Wellington, with a breadth of vision and a

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Liverpool promised two more battalions, 2000 strong, in a few weeks; and the 13th L.D., 750 strong.

At the same time the Office of Ordnance announced the embarkation of one troop of Horse Artillery to relieve Ross's; and of two additional companies of Field Artillery.

*Wellington MSS.* Liverpool to Wellington, 15th Dec. 1809 (omitted for some inscrutable reason from the extract printed in *Supp. Desp.* vi. 441). Office of Ordnance to Wellington, 19th Dec. 1809; Liverpool to Wellington, 1st Jan. 1810.

<sup>1</sup> The battalions were 3/1st, 1/9th, 2/38th. Peacocke's report of them was to the following purport:—

1/9th, a very fine battalion, but had better not undertake a long march yet, as many of the men are only just out of hospital [after Walcheren]; 72 sick; only 3 too young to march.

3/1st was intended for Gibraltar, and only at the last moment diverted to Lisbon. "The period will be very remote when they will be fit for active service." Many men under the influence of langour from former disease [Walcheren]; 200 men too old or too young to march; 90 returned sick, of whom 25 with ophthalmia.

2/38th. "599 effective rank and file; 469 paraded for me; many very young men; only 300-320 fit for active service."

*Wellington MSS.* Peacocke to Wellington, 2nd March, 6th April 1810.

1810. foresight such as I have encountered in no previous British Minister for War. "Your latest returns," such was the purport of his letter, "added to your latest reinforcements show a total of thirty-five thousand rank and file in Portugal. Making allowance for sick and casualties, let us call it thirty thousand effective, which is the number that we agreed to give you. Now, as to reinforcements, we can send you at least two thousand five hundred drafts and recruits, and have ordered to Portugal two battalions from Sicily, two more from Malta, and two more from Halifax, in all eight thousand men; in addition to which we are increasing the garrison of Cadiz likewise to eight thousand men, including the Portuguese regiment already there. The whole of these are under your command, and you are at liberty to add to, or draw from the troops at Cadiz, though we hope that it will not be necessary to take away the whole of them. The army at home is so sickly that I see no hope of reinforcing Cadiz beyond a number of four or five hundred men; but it will be for you to determine whether to increase or diminish the force there, and we have every confidence in your discretion."<sup>1</sup>

After this it can hardly be said that Ministers neglected the army in Portugal. They were hampered by the action of their predecessors, who had sent the first battalions of the army to the Scheldt, from whence only a wreck of them had returned, and who had poured the

<sup>1</sup> The reinforcements were estimated as follows :—

<i>From England</i> , recruits and drafts . . .	1500
<i>From Malta</i> , 1/31st, 750 ; 39th, 960 . . .	1710
<i>From Sicily</i> , 1/21st, 1000 ; Chasseurs Britanniques, 920 . . .	1920
<i>From Halifax</i> , 1/7th, 940 ; 23rd, 1000 . . .	1940
	<hr/>
	8070

*For Cadiz*, R.A., 500 ; Foot Guards, 1200 ; 2/30th, 600 ; 2/44th, 610 ; 1/79th, 1000 ; 2/87th, 700 ; 2/88th, 680 ; 94th, 700 ; 5 cos. 95th, 500 ; 1 Portuguese regiment, 1210. Total, 8000.

*Wellington MSS.* Liverpool to Wellington, 24th April 1810.

second battalions into the Peninsula. This had been in 1810. accordance with Pitt's favoured policy of great spasmodic efforts, and had been followed by the inevitable result of temporary paralysis in the army. The careful organisation of the Horse Guards, which provided for the feeding of first battalions in the field by second battalions at home, had been upset; and it was difficult to see how it could be speedily re-established. Only by recalling the fact that the last of the troops were not withdrawn from Walcheren until December, and that in February eleven thousand of those who had taken part in the expedition were still on the sick list, can we realise the extraordinary and courageous efforts of the Government to maintain the army in the Peninsula. Nevertheless, their good intentions towards Wellington were unexpectedly balked. Stuart, as we have seen, for long declined to part with his four battalions from the Mediterranean, the command to send them to Portugal being conditional only. Wellington evidently held that these orders should have been unconditional;<sup>1</sup> his opinion is supported by that of Nelson in a parallel case; and in the abstract the proposition may be granted. But in the concrete instance that is before us, the withdrawal of four battalions from Sicily could not have been safely accomplished without the total evacuation of the island, or, in other words, without breach of

<sup>1</sup> "In my opinion . . . it has been left to Sir J. Stuart's discretion whether to send the reinforcements or not. . . . When responsibility for the safety of the territory under their charge is thus placed upon the officers commanding in them, it cannot be expected that they would detach their troops; more particularly as, at the very moment, the enemy may threaten an attack upon the very point from which the troops are to be drawn." Wellington to Graham, 10th Aug. 1810. Cf. Nelson to Addington, 28th June 1803, when General Villette had received discretionary orders to give him two thousand men from the weak garrison of Malta for service in Sicily. "My dear Sir, these sort of orders should never be discretionary. You make an officer responsible for the safety of a place, and tell him in the same breath to send away so many men if he can safely do so. An officer cannot but secure himself from such great responsibility."



1810. treaties and complete recasting of British policy in the Mediterranean. Such a step might quite possibly have been advantageous, but it was not one to be hastily taken ; and Ministers can hardly be blamed if in the first feverish and uncertain weeks of their accession to office they did not consider it. However, the upshot of the whole matter was that Wellington at the most critical period of the war was weaker by four battalions than the Government intended him to be, though the total number of British troops under his command, in Spain and in Portugal, exceeded forty thousand men.

Lastly, we come to Wellington's instructions from the Government. The General had fairly told Ministers that the coming campaign must necessarily be defensive ; that if successful he could expect no credit, and that if he failed he should lose all reputation ; but that none the less they would betray the honour and interests of their country if they did not pursue the contest in the Peninsula, since, in his opinion, Portugal could be defended. Ministers took him at his word, and provided him with troops, as we have seen ; but they were naturally extremely anxious for positive assurances that the British army could in any event be safely embarked. These assurances Wellington did not hesitate to give repeatedly ; but he was too prudent to reveal to Liverpool the whole of his plans ; and the Minister accordingly was inclined to ply him with questions as to the advantages of different points of embarkation, the possibility of saving the Portuguese army without embarking it, and even as to the expediency of preferring Cadiz and Andalusia as a base and theatre of operations to Lisbon and Portugal. Wellington answered him with patience. As to the advantages of Lisbon over Cadiz, he was firm and immovable ; as to the point of embarkation he declared that he had already secured it by fortifying the heights of São Julião ; as to the Portuguese army he could only say that he would do his best to carry it away with him, but that, until the time came, he could not answer for

embarking a single man. But he on his side pro- 1810.  
pounded questions for the Government to answer. The destruction of Areizaga's army had ruined all hopes of help from Spain. The Portuguese troops had greatly improved, but it was impossible to calculate with any exactitude upon the degree of assistance to be expected from them. Was it the Government's wish that he should defend Portugal to the last; or that, upon the cessation of organised resistance in Spain, he should look seriously to the evacuation of the country and to the embarkation of as many of the Portuguese, military and civil, as he could? He pleaded with justice that the best way in which his question could be answered would be for the Government to explain its intentions in continuing the contest, and to leave the time of evacuation to the General on the spot.

Liverpool replied in a public despatch, which Wellington admitted to be clear and distinct; but he supplemented this by a private letter,<sup>1</sup> in which he threw doubt, though with many apologies, upon the correctness of Wellington's preference for São Julião as the place of embarkation, and put forward Peniche as an alternative. "I should apprise you," he wrote, "that a very considerable degree of alarm exists in this country respecting the safety of the British army in Portugal. . . . I have no difficulty in stating that you would rather be excused for bringing the army away a little too soon than by remaining in Portugal a little too long. . . . I do not mean by this observation that you would be justified in evacuating Portugal before the country was attacked in force by the enemy; but, whenever this event shall occur, the chances of successful defence are considered here by all persons, military as well as civil, so improbable that I could not recommend any attempt at what may be called desperate resistance."

It is difficult to identify exactly the misguided person who prompted Liverpool to write these un-

<sup>1</sup> Liverpool to Wellington. 13th March 1810.

1810. fortunate words. I strongly suspect from the close collocation of his name that it was that interfering busy-body, Charles Stewart, who even in August, 1809, had advised Castlereagh that it would be his wisest plan to embark the greater part of the Peninsular army for employment elsewhere. "If you cannot send a much greater force than Wellesley talked of defending Portugal with," so this great General had written, "I am certain you will not effect it."<sup>1</sup> From a scornful reference to "persons who have never seen either Peniche or São Julião," Wellington's suspicions, as I certainly think, had fastened upon this same individual. However, he kept his temper, and having, apparently from politeness, ascribed Liverpool's misgivings to Sir John Moore's opinions, he delivered his counterblast. "From your public letter," he wrote in effect, "I understand that, if there exists a military necessity for it, I am to evacuate the country; if not, I am not to evacuate the country; which means that I am not to be frightened away by a force which I do not consider superior to my own. This means again, that I may have to bring matters not to desperation, but to extremities. But in this case São Julião must be the right place for embarkation, for I cannot embark at Peniche without uncovering Lisbon; and since possession of Lisbon is the main object, it is useless to empower me to proceed to extremities unless I embark at São Julião." From this severe reasoning he drew the logical conclusion, not for Liverpool's benefit, but for his own and for that of some of his correspondents, that the Minister's public and private instructions were self-contradictory. However, he continued his letter to Liverpool respecting the port of embarkation with a jest. "When we do go, I feel a little anxiety to go like gentlemen out of the hall-door, particularly after the preparations which I had made to enable us to do so, and not out of the back door or by the area."

<sup>1</sup> *Londonderry MSS.* Charles Stewart to Castlereagh, 18th Aug. 1809.

Finally he concluded with a manly and dignified appeal, 1810.  
 "I am perfectly aware of the risks that I run personally, whatever may be the result of the operations in the Peninsula. All I beg is that, if I am to be held responsible, I may be left to the exercise of my own judgment ; and I ask for the fair confidence of Government upon the measures which I am to adopt."<sup>1</sup>

In all this there was nothing very new or extraordinary. It is common enough, as Wellington must have known, for Cabinet Ministers to be plied with unofficial comment upon technical matters which, if urged by men of reputation for knowledge, they may be unable, from their own unfamiliarity with the subject, to reject at once as useless. In such cases they not unfrequently convey this counsel privately to a General in the field, with the idea, not of guiding or embarrassing him, but of apprising him of the kind of criticism that is passed upon his operations at home ; of acquitting their conscience towards their country in case the criticism should by chance be sound ; or, if not, of obtaining from him information that will rebut it. Such certainly was Liverpool's intention, nor had he the slightest wish to trouble Wellington with interference, or to fail towards him in loyalty. Wellington, however, unfortunately, took a different view. The truth is that he did not feel sure of his position, and chafed over the foolish and carping comment of the press and of the Opposition in Parliament. Even when still flushed by his successes on the Douro his tone was sometimes in private despondent. "In the present state of the public mind," he wrote to Villiers in June 1809, "I believe that it will be very difficult to satisfy the people with anything ; and the Government are so weak that they are afraid to take the lead and to guide public opinion upon any subject."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 31st Jan. (2 letters), 9th Feb., 1st March, 2nd April ; Liverpool to Wellington, 27th Feb., 13th March ; 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Villiers, 21st June 1809. This passage, which is suppressed in the printed despatches, continues thus :—"I am

1810. At that time the Government included Canning and Castlereagh ; now the Cabinet, of whose weakness he complained, had given place to the apparently still feebler administration of Perceval and Liverpool. Since then the Common Council of London had, to use his own words, made a dash at him ; and he had concluded that, whether he succeeded or failed, he could expect no mercy from that body. Against such attacks the Government alone could protect him ; and he had so little confidence in its strength and its stability that he was always girding at it. "I am convinced that the Government cannot last," he wrote to Liverpool in March 1810 ; and he went on to hint that Ministers would do well to invoke the aid of Lord Grenville. "The Government are terribly afraid that I shall get them and myself into a scrape," he wrote to Admiral Berkeley a month later ; "but what can be expected from men who are beaten in the House of Commons three times a week ?" Even after Perceval had fought his way through the session of 1810, Wellington complained to his brother Wellesley Pole that it was not fair for a Government to make a man Commander-in-Chief, unless they were certain of a majority in Parliament to support him in case of accidents ; and he added that he had pressed for the strengthening of the administration much against the inclination of Ministers.<sup>1</sup>

If this had been all, there would be little worth noticing in such remarks. It is nothing very extraordinary that a General over a thousand miles from home should go astray in his political predictions, though it was rather ridiculous of him to have supposed that a weak Government needed his advice to strengthen itself. Perceval and Liverpool, as shall be seen, did

very indifferent what the opinion is of our operations. I shall do the best I can with the force given me ; and if the people of England are not satisfied, they must send somebody else who will do better."

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 1st March ; to Admiral Berkeley, 7th April 1810 ; to Wellesley Pole, 11th January 1811.

their utmost, though in vain, to persuade the leading 1810.  
men of all parties to join them ; but it was not their business to apprise Wellington of these negotiations, any more than it was Wellington's to give them prematurely a plan of the lines of Torres Vedras. But Wellington chose to draw the conclusion that, because the Government was weak, it was therefore disloyal to him. When the supply of specie or the numbers of his reinforcements did not come up to his expectation, he assumed instantly that Ministers might have sent him more of both, but were deliberately withholding them. When Liverpool gave him exactly the instructions that he wanted in public despatches, but asked in private to have the misgivings, instilled by others, set at rest, Wellington jumped to the opinion that the Minister was taking underhand steps to set himself right with the public in any event ; so that, in case of success, he could point to his public instructions, or, in case of failure, to his private letters. Reasoning from all these superficial and uncertain signs, Wellington deduced that Ministers were not sturdily at his back, nor heartily wedded to the policy of carrying on the war in the Peninsula—in fact, that they would stick to him only so long as he was successful, and throw him and his policy over at the first mishap. Nor was it possible for a long time to purge these ideas from his head. In vain Perceval, Liverpool, and Wellesley Pole assured him, and indeed by their actions proved to him, that even though their supporters hung back, they themselves were strenuously upholding him, and would uphold him ; the General, being tenacious of his opinions, remained for long unsatisfied. Throughout 1810 nothing that Liverpool did was right ; and even in January 1811 Wellington wrote to Pole that the War Minister had been dabbling in a game separate from that to be played in Portugal ever since he came into office, and had never acted with himself on any broad or liberal system of confidence.

Now nothing can be more certain than that, if

1810. Liverpool believed in any military principle, it was that of employing the British army, so far as possible, as a single compact body and not in small powerless detachments. He was furious, until due explanation was made to him, with Sir John Stuart for refusing to part with his battalions from Sicily; and he condemned, as we have seen, Stuart's raids upon the Ionian Islands. Castlereagh had not been able wholly to free himself from the traditions of Pitt, but Liverpool cast them away altogether. Ministers were undoubtedly weak at the outset in the country, and anxious as to the fate of the British army in the Peninsula. It would have been strange if they had not been so, for they had accepted their military policy from a General who was none of their choosing; whose family, from the wealth of good posts allotted to it, was regarded very jealously; and whose last campaign could not be reckoned at best as more than a negative success.<sup>1</sup> It must be remarked also that these Ministers were patriotic men, who dreaded misfortune to themselves less than misfortune to their country from their fall from office. Yet, upon a few hasty and mistaken letters of Wellington, malignant political partisans, such as Napier, have founded and published the libel, too often repeated, that the Government wilfully starved and crippled Wellington and his army, and never in their hearts supported him. This is utterly

<sup>1</sup> The ubiquity of the Wellesleys at this time is hardly realised. Lord Wellesley was first ambassador in Spain, and then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; William Wellesley Pole was Chief Secretary for Ireland; Henry Wellesley, Minister to the Spanish Government at Cadiz; and Arthur Wellesley was Commander-in-Chief in the Peninsula. And as though three Wellesleys were not enough in Spain at one time, Richard Wellesley, the natural son of Lord Wellesley, and an extremely amiable and accomplished man, for some time made a fourth at Cadiz. As to the campaign of 1809, the sentiments of the Opposition may be judged from an article on the "Conduct of the War," in the *Edinburgh Review* of Oct. 1809. Among some just criticism of the campaign of Talavera, the campaign of the Douro is summed up as a "preliminary weakening of the army by detachments and skirmishes in Portugal."

false ; and if the steadfastness and courage of 1810. Wellington in undertaking a task apparently so desperate as the defence of Portugal be commended, not less praise must be found for the men who, in the face of three military failures, on the Scheldt, on the Tagus, and in the Bay of Naples, had boldly taken up the reins of government and speeded him to the accomplishment of his task.

Lastly, let it not be thought that the preceding paragraphs have been written from any desire to belittle the greatness of Wellington. It is certain that he mistrusted the Government in 1810 and 1811, although it did not merit his mistrust ; and that fact, having left its mark upon his operations, is one that must be borne in mind. But he could show some ground for his opinions, perhaps more in the shape of letters from private persons than now appears in his correspondence ; and he was not without experience of British politicians. Nor is it easy to conceive of anything that could disquiet him more than a haunting dread lest his employers might be untrue to him. He was responsible for the military policy of the Government, but he too was in the highest degree a patriot ; and he clung to it, not for the sake of his own military reputation, but chiefly because, being a man of genius, he had divined that it was the policy that would save Europe. Small blame to him if at times of embarrassment and stress—and the early years of the Peninsular War were one long, arduous, continued strain—his heart misgave him lest the Government from sheer weakness should abandon the great enterprise, or yield place to an Opposition which would renounce it with ostentation. Then there would follow something worse than a defeat. Wellington had committed himself deeply to many parties in Portugal and to some even in Spain ; he had promised to save them if they would bestir themselves, and had forced them by sheer energy and strength of will to make large sacrifices. These allies, if his worst expectations were



1810. verified, he would have to desert with shame and dishonour, making way for the insolent oppression of the most rapacious of French Marshals ; he would have to march his army to the sea amid such a scene of disgrace as that which in Flanders resulted from the advent of the Tories to office in 1713 ; and, worst of all, the cause of Europe would be lost. Happily no such evil results were to come about, thanks to the loyalty and perseverance not of Wellington only, but of the Ministers who employed him. And if any one feels disposed to censure either him or them, because both occasionally sought with almost feverish eagerness for grounds of confidence in each other, then let the critic reflect not upon the men but upon the nature of British Parliamentary government ; and let him ponder over the undoubted fact that such a Government is the worst that can possibly be devised for the conduct of war, because the governing people holds that some one must always be blamed for defeat, whereas no General, not even a Napoleon, can promise in a pitched battle the certainty of victory.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

I COME now to the actual doings and movements of 1810. the British army in Portugal during the year 1810. Wellington, it will be remembered, after more than a week's stay at Coimbra, fixed his headquarters at Vizeu on the 12th of January to make his dispositions for the defence of Portugal. First, therefore, let us consider the possible lines for invasion of the country. A glance at the map would seem to indicate them instantly in the course of the two great rivers, the Douro and the Tagus, which, rising on the east of Spain, flow steadily westward through Portugal to the sea. But, as has been well observed, the rivers of the Iberian Peninsula are not lines of communication but barriers, so deeply are they sunk through long sections of their course in tremendous rocky gorges; and yet they are untrustworthy barriers, owing to the rapidity with which they change from impassable floods to a mere alternation of deep pools and shallows, such as are fordable even by armies. In fact, they are mostly typical mountain streams of the kind that make the angler long to throw a fly into them, but not such as to gladden the heart of general, engineer, or statesman. It need hardly be added that, this being their character, they are navigable even by small boats only for comparatively short distances from their entry into the sea.

For this reason the roads in Portugal for the most part avoid the rivers rather than the contrary; and it is now necessary to look a little closer to their direction. Since Galicia had been evacuated by the French, an

1810. invasion of Portugal from the north, as for instance by the line that Soult had taken in 1809, was impracticable to them; and we may therefore confine ourselves to the eastern frontier, from the line of the Douro on the north to the sea on the south. But this distance may be at once abridged for all practical purposes to the space between the Douro and the Guadiana; for, though it was perfectly feasible for the French to traverse the marches south of the Tagus, it was impossible for them, in face of a superior naval force, to cross from two to six miles of tidal water in order to reach Lisbon. Even after the width of the estuary contracts, the river is rendered impassable and indeed unapproachable for six or eight miles owing to swamps, until at Salvaterra de Magos it becomes simply a broad stream, presenting no greater difficulties than its breadth and extreme inconstancy in the variations between high and low water. There was, however, no bridge lower than Abrantes, so that the passage would need to be accomplished in boats or rafts, which would be no easy task in the face of an enemy; while, even if the invading army were to be safely transferred to the northern bank, it would find itself still with thirty miles of difficult and highly defensible country between it and Lisbon. Moreover, an advance of the French from the Guadiana was to some extent checked by the fortresses of Badajoz on the Spanish and of Elvas on the Portuguese side. Still, these might be masked; and, if the Allied army were fully occupied with other French forces in the north, the movement, though subsidiary, would yet be disquieting, since it would threaten, and, if successful, would turn the right flank and rear of the Allied line. Wellington from the first assumed that the French would attack in two distinct lines, to north and south of the Tagus;<sup>1</sup> and it will be seen that he laid his plans accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Col. Fletcher, 20th Oct.; to Admiral Berkeley, 26th Oct. 1809.

Such being the difficulties of reaching Lisbon 1810. through the province of Alemtejo, it was obvious that the main stream of the invasion must enter Portugal through the province of Beira at some point on the hundred miles of frontier between the Douro and the Tagus. But this space in its turn is bisected by a prolongation of the central mountain range, which runs from east to west across the Iberian Peninsula. It is here called the Serra da Estrella, and, though of no extraordinary height, is so steep and rugged and so much seamed by ravines as to be for military purposes an unsurmountable obstacle. This great block of hills produces another effect which is worthy of notice, in that it compels all the waters to north-east and south-east of it to flow northward or southward to the Douro or Tagus, instead of turning their course westward as the shortest way to the sea; hence the series of rivers which run parallel to the frontier, the Agueda, the Coa, and their tributaries on the north, the Ponsul, the Ocreza, and the Zezere on the south of the Serra; whereas the Mondego drains a comparatively small area in its course from east to west. An invading army, unless it be of enormous strength, must therefore choose between advance to north or to south of the Serra da Estrella, communication between two columns on either side of it being impossible. To the south it may take in the reverse direction the road used by Wellington for his movement upon Talavera, by Zarza la Mayor and Castello Branco; but this, though practicable for an army proceeding eastward, based on Lisbon and possessing magazines at Abrantes, was far less promising for troops, and especially for French troops, entering from Spain. Apart from the fact that water was frequently not to be found near the road for considerable distances, the way itself was so steep as to be untraversable by artillery without extreme exertion; while the country was so inhospitable and so thinly populated as to be practically destitute of supplies. Junot had taken the route, though by a

1810. worse road, to the south of the Serra da Estrella in the winter of 1807 ; but his experience was not such as to encourage a repetition of the experiment.

It was, therefore, almost certain that the main French advance must be made between the Douro and the Serra, along the line made familiar by former contests between Portugal and Spain, by Ciudad Rodrigo upon Almeida. This latter fortress was in itself nothing very formidable, and was, moreover, wrongly placed, being on the edge of the great plain of Leon instead of on the west side of the Coa at the entrance to the mountainous country. From it four roads led by devious routes towards Lisbon. The first, to north of the Mondego, wound by Pinhel, Trancoso, and Vizeu to Coimbra ; the second, parallel to it but to south of the same river, ran equally to Coimbra ; the third struck more directly southward by Celorico, Belmonte, and Castello Branco upon Abrantes ; and the fourth, called the Estrada Nova, cut off the angle between Fundão and Castello Branco, debouching upon the third road above mentioned at Cortiçada, close to Sobreira Formosa. One and all of these roads traversed extremely difficult country ; but the fourth passed through what was to all intent a wilderness, and Wellington gave orders for it to be destroyed—though, feeling somewhat doubtful whether the work had been effectually done, he could not altogether neglect it.<sup>1</sup> There were, of course, countless other paths and tracks by which infantry and cavalry could pass ; but no roads except those above mentioned were possible for artillery. No one who has not seen the country can conceive how rough, steep, and mountainous these Portuguese Highlands are. The highways are now greatly improved, but still not very numerous ; and, to

<sup>1</sup> The order for its destruction was given in January 1810 (Wellington to Beresford, 23rd Jan. 1810), but on the 2nd of July he wrote to Hill, "The Estrada Nova has been destroyed, but I understand not very effectually"; and he proceeds to give orders for the road to be watched. But by February 1811, as Mr. Oman points out (iii. 161 *n.*), it was practically impassable.

judge by the old tracks that passed for roads a century 1810. ago, a campaign in Eastern Beira must have been nearly as difficult, climate apart, as a campaign in the West Indies.<sup>1</sup>

Such being the nature of the country, it remains to describe Wellington's dispositions for repelling an invasion. The length of frontier which he was required to guard measured, roughly speaking, two hundred miles from the fortress of Almeida on the north to that of Setubal on the south. Between these two lay the regular fortresses of Elvas and Abrantes; the former having further an outlying post in Campo Mayor, a small and obsolete stronghold from twelve to fifteen miles north-eastward of it. Almeida, Elvas, and Abrantes were early taken in hand by British engineers, repaired, and, in the case of Abrantes, almost reconstructed. Almeida was garrisoned by one regiment of Portuguese regulars and three of militia, in all five thousand men, under the English General William Cox. Elvas was entrusted to the Portuguese General Leite, a vigilant and capable officer, with two regiments of Portuguese regulars and five of militia, making a total of eight thousand men. Campo Mayor was held by a single Portuguese battalion of militia. Abrantes, being small, was garrisoned by two militia regiments only, under the Portuguese Colonel Lobo; but the importance of the place must not be estimated by the strength of its guard. Not only did it command the one permanent bridge of boats over the Tagus and thus form the connecting link between Alemtejo and Beira, but it marked approximately the point at which the river, turning definitely from a westerly to a southerly course, begins to narrow the peninsula of Lisbon (if I may so term it) from a width of sixty miles to its final point of fifteen miles. Hence it lay

<sup>1</sup> I should judge that a march from Exeter to the Land's End over Dartmoor and the Cornish moors, as they were four generations ago, would have been easier than a march from Ciudad Rodrigo to Coimbra.

1810. upon the flank of all roads leading to the capital, whether from the north or from the west. Wellington's orders to Lobo were to resist to the very end, and to burn the bridge of boats to the last plank before surrendering. There remained yet another fortress on the west, Peniche, which, lying at the extremity of an isthmus which is covered at high water, could be rendered impregnable. Many considered it, and would have had the British Government consider it, the best port of embarkation for the British army in case of defeat; but Wellington valued it only as a post that might be held by the British after all else had been abandoned, for purposes of raids or of a second landing. It stood, therefore, alone, and formed no part of the scheme of defence.

It remains to mention the new works constructed by Wellington. First and foremost come the lines of Torres Vedras, of which detailed mention must be deferred to a later period. But apart from them he threw up a line of redoubts on the Alva at its junction with the Mondego about Ponte da Murcella, to block the road which runs from Celorico to Coimbra on the north side of that river; every consideration leading him to suppose that this would be the route taken by Massena. He also made an entrenched camp on the Zezere near its junction with the Tagus, extending it from Tancos on the south-west to Martinhel on the north-east, so as to bar the way to any force which, masking the fortress, might invade by way of Castello Branco. As shall in due time be seen, it chanced that no enemy ever came near either of these positions, because Massena, contrary to all reasonable expectation, chose the worst road in Portugal for his advance; and Wellington has therefore received no credit for his efforts to arrest invasion at points considerably more remote from Lisbon than Torres Vedras.

So much for what may be called stationary defences; the troops from south to north were disposed as follows. In the extreme south the strong

places of Algarve, besides Setubal in Alemtejo, were <sup>1810.</sup> held by Portuguese troops. Farther north, at the southern edge of the possible theatre of operations, the roads from the Guadiana were guarded by the Portuguese garrisons in Elvas and Campo Mayor, supported by the British Second Division under General Hill, and by the bulk of the Portuguese regulars under Beresford at Abrantes and Thomar. However unlikely an irruption from this side might be, Wellington was bound to take full precautions against it, and therefore to divide his British troops between Hill and himself. From the Tagus to the Serra da Estrella, an unlikely point of entrance, the line was taken up by ten regiments of Portuguese militia and one of cavalry under the Portuguese Colonel Lecor, with the English Colonel John Wilson for his second. Next, at the extreme easterly point of the Serra, in the commanding position of Guarda, lay the Fourth British Division under General Cole; and next to north of Cole, the Light Brigade under Craufurd with headquarters at Pinhel. In support of these the Third Division was stationed at Celorico, with the First Division in reserve about Vizeu; and the Cavalry Division, excepting one regiment attached to the infantry, was cantoned for convenience of forage in the valley of the Tagus. Beyond the Douro General Bacellar, having under his orders the British Colonels Trant and Miller, and nominally also his compatriot Silveira, guarded the extreme northern flank of the army with twenty-one regiments of militia.

Thus, in the event of an invasion from the north, the British troops could rapidly and without difficulty be concentrated in the valley of the Mondego, to fall back upon Hill and Beresford at their leisure. In the event of an invasion from the Guadiana, Hill and Beresford could defend the passage of the Tagus until reinforced from the north. Lastly, if the enemy should choose the road of Castello Branco, Hill and Beresford could advance to the strong position of



1810. Sobreira Formosa to back the retreating Lecor; the means of turning that position having been abolished by the destruction of the Estrada Nova. Furthermore, in order to better his means of movement north and south, Wellington improved and widened the road northward from Thomar to Espinhal, which, as he said, was one of the most important for his line of communications, and—a rare thing in Portugal—had not a hill on it.<sup>1</sup> He had established a flying bridge at Villa Velha whereby Hill and Beresford, first crossing to the south bank of the Tagus at Abrantes, and taking the road parallel to the river as far as Niza, could turn north, recross the river, and reach either Castello Branco or Sobreira Formosa by an improved and much less arduous route.

Altogether, so long as the enemy confined themselves to one line of invasion only, the British Commander could hope to check them at some distance from the capital; but if they should advance in great force from north and east simultaneously, the situation could not fail to be critical. This latter was the movement which Wellington especially dreaded; but the French siege of Cadiz had lessened its probability; and the General therefore was urgent for leaving Victor undisturbed before that city, so as to encourage him to remain there. Meanwhile he could only mature betimes his plans for destroying all bridges and removing all means of transport and subsistence from before the enemy, in case the British should be driven within their final refuge in the lines round Lisbon.<sup>2</sup> For the rest it was his strength to be cool, patient, and vigilant.

In some quarters watchfulness was made easy by the fortresses on the roads; while to the south of the Sierra de Gata the security of the British and Portuguese was further assured by the spreading of

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Beresford, 19th Feb. 1810.

<sup>2</sup> This he did as early as in February 1810. Wellington to Generals Leite and Bacellar, 28th Feb., 1st March 1810.

Romana's army in a long line from the pass of Perales 1810. southward to Zafra. But in the north about Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, where the passage of the main French force must certainly be looked for, Wellington depended principally, and rightly, upon Robert Craufurd. This officer was now forty-six years of age, and soured by disappointed ambition. An ardent soldier, who had studied his profession in Prussia at the time when that country was held to be the centre of all military knowledge, he had forsaken the army for three years in the hope of making a fortune in India, and had never recovered the ground lost in the interval. Windham, by flagrant jobbing, had, as we have seen, endeavoured to give him an independent command in South America; and Craufurd, upon finding that independence threatened, had at once asked leave to come home, though he had in the end proceeded to Rio de la Plata, and had been compelled to surrender his brigade at the storm of Buenos Ayres. In Moore's campaign he had missed the battle of Coruña; in the late campaign of 1809 he had missed, some said through his own fault, the battle of Talavera. In the meanwhile the Duke of York, his kindly patron, had left the Horse Guards, and the Duke's successor was by no means so well disposed towards him. And now he was once again on active service, a mere colonel with local rank as brigadier, though senior in years to every Lieutenant-general in the Peninsula, burning for distinction, and craving for higher command.

He was certainly the best officer in the matter of outpost-duty, and one of the best trainers of troops in the army. He retained command of the Light Brigade,<sup>1</sup> which had originally been taught by Moore, and he now added to its efficiency by drawing up a code of regulations which would enable him to reckon exactly the time that would be required for the accomplishment of any given march or other operation. Several of these regulations seemed at first vexatious and trivial

<sup>1</sup> Forty-third, Fifty-second, Ninety-fifth.

1810. both to men and officers—as, for instance, the rule that no man on the march was to step a foot out of his way to avoid a pool of water or other such unpleasant obstacle—but they soon perceived that their Brigadier was working for one object only, that every movement of his brigade should be so punctually performed as to enable its duration to be calculated with certainty beforehand. He enforced his code with merciless severity, and the results which he obtained were extraordinary. “Seven minutes sufficed for his division to get under arms in the middle of the night, and a quarter of an hour, night or day, to bring it in order of battle to its alarm post, with the baggage loaded and assembled at a convenient spot in the rear.” Nevertheless he was not one of those ideal teachers who can by sheer ascendancy kindle men to surpass themselves. He could take pride in his troops, and make them take pride in themselves, but he was a driver rather than a leader of men.<sup>1</sup> Craufurd’s great defect, as has already been told, was a violent temper; and hence, though he had not a few sincere admirers, he was generally and not undeservedly unpopular.

Apart from his temper, too, the man was jealous, sensitive, and incurably self-important and egoistic. So far as I have been able to follow his career, he seems to have been always anxious to thrust himself to the front, whether by letters to Generals and Ministers,<sup>2</sup> by interminable speeches in the House of Commons, or, as shall in due time be seen, by rash engagement of the enemy. At such times he would forget every one except Robert Craufurd; and this tendency, coupled with a disposition to overvalue his own talents, made him a most disobedient and insubordinate officer. The failing was the more dangerous inasmuch as he did not, as a rule,

<sup>1</sup> For this reason I should be disposed to rank him below the great trainers of troops of our own time, Hawley of the Sixtieth, and his pupil Redvers Buller.

<sup>2</sup> He sent long memoranda to Lord Grenville about the re-organisation of the army, and to Wellington about points of departmental organisation.

shine in action. This was probably due to his excitable 1810. temperament, for so accomplished a master of outpost-duties must certainly have possessed no common eye for ground. Wellington, who may have known him ever since the campaign of Seringapatam in 1799, appreciated his good side most thoroughly, and did not fail to let him know it. It would not be easy to find a more flattering letter than that with which he placed the command of the outposts in Craufurd's hands. Not less conciliatory are the letters in which he promises to keep his command distinct, adds three foreign regiments to it, and apologises because, owing to the arrival of Generals of high seniority, he can throw no more British troops into his division.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it was only with considerable difficulty that Wellington kept him in command of a division at all, owing to the number of officers senior to Craufurd in the Army. But, on the other hand, Wellington was careful rarely to trust him alone before an enemy in force, nor, as I have said, would ever admit him to intimacy; and he was right, for, though Craufurd felt both gratitude and respect towards his Commander, his egoism was too intense to allow him to abate his pretensions to unique ability and importance, while at the same time he was strangely deficient in the matter of tact.<sup>2</sup> However, upon the north-east frontier of

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Craufurd, 18th Feb.; 5th, 8th, 11th March; 9th, 15th, 20th April; 9th Dec. 1810.

<sup>2</sup> In proof of my assertion I print a letter from Craufurd to Wellington of 17th Dec. 1810 (*Wellington MSS.*). Craufurd had asked for leave to go home, in itself a tactless proceeding, for he knew that Wellington was strongly opposed on principle to granting leave to officers except on grounds of ill-health. Wellington answered with singular moderation, hinting that if Craufurd did go away on leave, it would be difficult for him to keep the command of the division. Craufurd's answer, slightly abridged, ran as follows:—

"The objection to my availing myself of your indulgence was not wholly unexpected, but I had got into the habit of allowing my hopes to coincide with my wishes on the subject, and of flattering myself that the objection might be overcome; and if you honour me with your confidence sufficiently to wish me to keep command of the Light Division, I beg you to consider whether that may not

1810. Portugal in the winter of 1809-10 Craufurd was most emphatically the right man in the right place.

Until February all was quiet on the frontier, and Wellington remained untroubled except by a request of the Spaniards that he should advance into Castile, in order to relieve the pressure of Soult's army upon Andalusia; a movement which, though not without the scope of his intentions, he thought it unprofitable at the moment to execute. He instructed Craufurd, however, not lightly to abandon the line of the Coa, since it was possible that the army might take the offensive;<sup>1</sup> though the despatch of the detachment to Cadiz under General Stewart soon banished any such ideas. Presently, however, came the news that Mortier Feb. 12. had summoned Badajoz on the 12th of February, and Wellington at once ordered Hill to lead his division

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be done without making me pay too dearly for it. No sacrifice that I may have to make can diminish the gratitude which I shall ever feel to you for your conduct to me since I had the good fortune to join your army; and, if the alternative is to resign my command or to abandon the hopes which I have entertained and encouraged others to entertain, of my being allowed to pass a few weeks of the winter with my family, I must submit to the latter, for it would be impossible for me not to return to the army; and to serve in command of a brigade next campaign after commanding a division in this, is more than I could make up my mind to. But I should certainly feel that I was paying dearly for this honour if, besides incurring the ill will of many of my seniors, to say nothing of the increased responsibility of my command, I should find myself prevented for an indefinite time from seeing my family and looking to private affairs which, if not urgent, are important enough to make my presence desirable. It would not become me to suggest the means of obviating the difficulty, but . . . as, after all that you have done, I cannot think that any Minister would feel the inclination, or that any home Commander-in-Chief would have the power to interfere with your wishes, I should flatter myself that some arrangement with respect to the rank of the officers who came out with the reinforcements will enable you to satisfy the claims of my seniors, without reducing me to the painful alternative which I have at present to contemplate." In other words, everybody was to be inconvenienced in order that Robert Craufurd might see his wife and children.

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Frere, 30th Jan., 9th Feb.; to Sherbrooke, 31st Jan.; to Craufurd, 4th Feb. 1810.

forward to Portalegre. Immediately afterwards intelligence arrived that on the same day Ney had summoned Ciudad Rodrigo, and that Heudelet with the Second Corps had moved to Plasencia. Wellington at once decided that the French could not possibly undertake two sieges simultaneously, but conjectured rightly that Heudelet would probably cross the Tagus and join Mortier. He therefore directed Hill to be on his guard and to hold on to Portalegre for as long as possible; but refrained, in spite of Romana's entreaties, from any concentration for the relief of Badajoz, lest the French should concentrate likewise by drawing troops from the south, and force him to retire. So delicate was the tact with which Wellington encouraged the French to pursue their unseasonable operations before Cadiz.<sup>1</sup>

In March Junot's corps moved, as we have seen, to the siege of Astorga, while Ney's corps marched westward into Leon, pushing Loison's division forward to the Agueda. Ferey's brigade of this division lay at San Felices, not more than four miles from the nearest British station at Barba del Puerco; and Ferey's advanced parties naturally soon came into contact with Craufurd's. It was at this moment that Wellington committed the whole of the British outposts to Craufurd's care, directing Picton and Cole to support him, if need were, without further orders from headquarters. Already in February he had ordered Craufurd to be reinforced by two battalions of Portuguese Caçadores, and had honoured his command with the name of the Light Division; and he now sent him up the First Hussars of the King's German Legion, an admirable regiment, far better skilled than the British in the work of reconnaissance, and specially well placed with Craufurd, who spoke German fluently. With these and with the Light Brigade to support them, Craufurd watched the line or the Agueda from Escalhao on the north to Ciudad

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Beresford, 15th Feb.; to Craufurd, 18th Feb.; to Hill, 12th, 20th, 27th Feb. 1810.

1810. Rodrigo on the south, a distance of some thirty miles as the crow flies. Craufurd was now in his element, and gave striking evidence of his very remarkable ability. Four companies of Rifles were posted at Villar de Ciervos, as many more at Barba del Puerco, one company at Almogala, and one at Escalhao, the river being always passable by the bridge at Barba del Puerco and by fords at the three remaining places.<sup>1</sup> But with these exceptions the infantry was kept in the background, and the work of observation in the front was committed wholly to the German Hussars and to a few intelligent officers. The Agueda was sounded daily, and careful note was taken of the rise and fall of the water. A special department was organised for receiving and comparing the reports of deserters, who came in frequently from the German and Italian troops on the French side. Lastly, a system of signal-stations was devised for the instant transmission of intelligence of the enemy's movements to all parts of the line; and, from the perfection of the discipline inculcated by Craufurd, he could reckon exactly the time which any fraction of his troops would take to reach any given point. "The whole web of communication," as has been most happily written, "quivered at the slightest touch."<sup>2</sup> Yet these results were obtained with astonishing economy of strength and of labour. The soldiers were never harassed, whatever may have been the case with the officers,<sup>3</sup> and were subjected neither to strain nor to fatigue. Not a man was employed more than was absolutely necessary, and thus was attained the ideal of good outpost-duty, vigilance maintained, energy husbanded, and repose assured.

Once only the French ventured to test the merit of

<sup>1</sup> Leach's *Rough Sketches*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Oman, iii. 238.

<sup>3</sup> Kincaid reports a conversation between Beckwith and Arentschild, the colonel of the First Hussars. "Well, Colonel," said the German in broken English, "how you do?"—"Oh, tolerably well, thank you, considering that I am obliged to sleep with one eye open."—"Bei Gott," said the other, "I never sleeps at all" (*Random Shots*, p. 51).

Craufurd's dispositions ; and their experience did not encourage them to repeat the trial. On the night of the 19th of March six companies of voltigeurs, leaving a reserve of fifteen hundred men upon the eastern bank of the river, stole upon the bridge of Barba del Puerco, bayoneted the sentries before they could fire, and began rapidly to ascend the defile towards the village. The alarm was at once given by the sergeant's picquet. The outlying picquet came down instantly to meet the enemy, and holding its fire till the French were within fifteen yards, gave them a staggering volley. Then, seeking shelter behind the rocks, this little body of riflemen, though counting fewer than fifty soldiers, contrived by sheer skill and courage to check the advance of the French for half an hour, till Colonel Sidney Beckwith came up at the head of two more companies, and drove the French headlong down the defile and over the bridge. The loss of the Rifles in this little affair did not exceed twenty-three killed and wounded ;<sup>1</sup> that of the French was at least twice as great.

Early in April, Craufurd having reported unfavourably of the two battalions of Portuguese Caçadores, Wellington promised him a third, Colonel Elder's, of acknowledged excellence ; but the captious Robert was by no means satisfied. He wished to take the offensive for one thing, and he thought himself entitled to more British troops for another ; and he was so importunate upon this latter point that he actually talked of resigning his command. With great patience and tact Wellington soothed the feeling of his sensitive subordinate, at the same time setting his foot firmly upon Craufurd's ambitious projects. He had himself some idea, if a favourable opportunity should occur, of a raid for the destruction of the French magazines at Salamanca ; but on the 26th intelligence came in that the French were moving upon Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington was at first

<sup>1</sup> These are the figures given by Simmons, who was present. The number of casualties usually given is thirteen, which was the loss of the advanced company only.



1810. a little puzzled by their march, for he had not heard of the fall of Astorga upon the 22nd of April, and could not understand this preparation for a second siege ; but,
- April 27. none the less, on the 27th he advanced Spencer's division and his own headquarters to Celorico, and directed Hill to send Slade's cavalry brigade<sup>1</sup> by way of Villa Velha and Castello Branco to Guarda. In a few days the situation became clearer. The news of the surrender of Astorga
- April 30. arrived on the 30th, and together with it came a letter from the Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, stating that the French arrived before that city did not exceed four thousand, and appealing for help to drive them away. Craufurd, always eager for action without regard for ulterior consequences, advocated this course ; but Wellington knew better. It would be perfectly easy to push back a small hostile force from Ciudad Rodrigo ; but, unless the material collected at Salamanca for the siege could be destroyed, no advantage could possibly follow ; and the French, now that Astorga had fallen, were certainly far too strong to permit of the attempt. The movements of the enemy were still doubtful, but Wellington could make a shrewd guess at them and at their consequences. "I do not think," he wrote to Beresford, "that Junot will push into Galicia. If he does, they are not equal to the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo ; if he does not, we are not equal to its relief."<sup>2</sup>

In truth the movement of the French upon Ciudad Rodrigo was premature ; the force which actually closed upon the city consisting of no more than two brigades of Ney's corps, which sufficed to blockade it upon the east side of the Agueda only, and therefore left its communications with Portugal practically uninterrupted. Junot's corps was not yet upon the spot, and the material for a siege was still at Salamanca. In a few days the two brigades drew a few miles to northward,

May 12. whence General Mermet on the 12th of May sent in a

<sup>1</sup> First Royals, Fourteenth Light Dragoons.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Craufurd, 9th, 15th, 20th, 27th April, 2nd May ; to C. Stuart, 21st April ; to Beresford, 1st May, 1810.

fruitless summons to Ciudad Rodrigo. Continuous rain not only rendered the Agueda impassable, but prevented the transport of heavy guns, and so kept all operations at a standstill throughout the month of May. Nevertheless, the situation was anxious. Reynier on the 21st of April had attacked and destroyed an advanced party of Romana's army at La Roca, a few miles to the north-east of Badajoz; and, though the offensive movement had at once been arrested by the march of Hill's corps eastward over the Serra de San Mamede, yet Romana was thoroughly frightened. The arrival of a French detachment in Estremadura from Andalusia—a force which had hardly arrived before it was obliged to return—heightened his fears for himself and for Badajoz. He wrote frantic appeals to Wellington for the help of the Second Division, and even succeeded in somewhat unnerving its commander. Wellington reluctantly permitted Hill to move forward a second time to extricate Romana, but he was careful to caution his subordinate against too ready credence of Spanish reports. "It is obvious," he wrote, "that there is nothing the Spaniards wish for so much as to involve our troops in their operations, which could lead to no advantage, and might end in the loss of everything." The Spanish generals might grumble—indeed they did grumble freely—but Wellington was not to be induced to act with them again.<sup>1</sup>

Before May was ended, however, the prospects for the future became clearer. On the 16th a report became current that Massena was expected at Valladolid to take command of the army in that quarter; and two days later this was confirmed by a French officer, who had deserted in consequence of a duel with one of his superiors, and who gave the additional intelligence that the Second, Sixth, and Eighth Corps, eighty thousand

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 9th, 23rd May; to H. Wellesley, 14th May; to Hill, 17th, 28th May. Romana and Hill to Wellington, 29th April, *Wellington MSS.* Wellington to Hill, 17th, 28th May, 1810.

1810. men strong, were to be placed under the Marshal's orders as the army of Portugal.<sup>1</sup> This was of course true, the decree to that effect having been signed by Napoleon on the 17th of April ; but the Emperor's later orders respecting the campaign were somewhat singular. His first design was that Massena with the Sixth and Eighth Corps, reckoned at fifty thousand men, should advance and besiege Ciudad Rodrigo ; that Reynier, acting under Massena's orders, should move to Abrantes and manœuvre on the north bank of the Tagus ; and that the Fifth Corps should do likewise on the south side of the river about Badajoz. But he supplemented this

May 18. two days later by a second instruction, wherein he declared that the invasion of Portugal must be conducted methodically and without haste, after preliminary capture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida ; and that, in fact, the regular entry into the country must be deferred till September, when the extreme heat was over and the harvest gathered in. In these amended orders also he omitted all reference to the Fifth Corps ; changed Reynier's centre of operations from Abrantes to Alcantara ; and assigned to another body of ten thousand men under General Séras the duty of manœuvring between Astorga and Zamora, so as at once to maintain communication with Bonnet in Asturias, contain the Spanish army of Galicia, and threaten the frontier of Portugal about Bragança. According to these dispositions the force of Séras would form the right wing, the two corps of Massena the centre, and Reynier's troops the left wing.

May 15. Massena himself arrived at Salamanca on the 15th of May. He was now fifty-two years of age, still incomparably the best general in the French Army, Napoleon only excepted, although he was beginning to fail. He had served fourteen years as private and non-commissioned officer in the French Royal army, before the outbreak of the Revolution, and since 1792 had been almost continually on active service. His last

<sup>1</sup> Lieut. Shaw (A.D.C. to Craufurd) to Wellington, 18th May 1810. *Wellington MSS.*

campaign had been that of Wagram, in the course of 1810. which he had been much shaken by a bad fall from his horse ; and he had returned from the fatigue and hardships of the war in great need of repose. But it was one of Napoleon's defects that, needing no rest himself, he could not understand that others might require it ; nor did he realise that, unless men are indulged with seasons of comfort and even luxury after toil and privation, they will indemnify themselves by considerable latitude of conduct in the field. When, therefore, Massena, yielding very reluctantly to Napoleon's wish, accepted command of the army of Portugal, he took his mistress with him into the field. Underbred and untrustworthy himself he was, as happens so frequently in men who have risen from low to high estate, intensely suspicious of the same failings in others. Ney and he were old enemies ; Junot was furiously jealous at being superseded in command of the army of Portugal ; Reynier, with or without reason, he disliked ; and his relations with these subordinates were not made easier by the presence of the lady above mentioned at headquarters. For the rest, Massena was in the matter of money the most rapacious and dishonest of all the French commanders, which is not to say a little ; indeed, to put matters briefly, he was, albeit a great military genius, neither more nor less than a blackguard. Yet it is impossible not to pity a man of so well-deserved reputation as a soldier, set down to such a task as was assigned to him by Napoleon. "Gentlemen," he said to his staff, when he met them at Salamanca, "I am here against my own wish ; I begin to find myself too old and too weary for active service."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, Wellington had completed the concentration begun on the 27th of April by ordering five brigades of Portuguese infantry to Celorico ; and by the second week of May he had assembled eighteen thousand British troops and fourteen thousand Portuguese in the quadrilateral formed by Pinhel, Almeida

<sup>1</sup> Authorities in Oman. iii. 208.

1810. Guarda, and Celorico. In this bleak, barren, and desolate country, all of it over twelve hundred feet, and Guarda over three thousand feet above the sea, they waited through day after day of continuous rain for the enemy to make the first movement, every division having clear orders as to its duty in case the enemy should pass the Agueda in force. As a further precaution, Wellington had given instructions for the repair and armament of Fort Concepcion, a small Spanish work which faces Almeida on the eastern bank of the Turones.<sup>1</sup> At last
- May 30. on the 30th Ney arrived before Ciudad Rodrigo with his whole corps and a reserve division of cavalry; while Junot, after leaving detachments at Zamora, Toro, and the pass of Baños, stationed one division of infantry and another of dragoons at San Felices, with a second division of infantry at Ledesma in support of
- June 1. the Sixth Corps. On the 1st of June Ney threw a bridge across the Agueda a mile and a half above
- June 5. Ciudad Rodrigo, and on the 5th a second bridge below it. By this last he sent a division and a half of infantry and a brigade of light cavalry over the river,
- June 11. which thrust back Craufurd's outposts and by the 11th had cut off communications with the garrison.

Heavy rains still kept the waters so high in flood that Wellington harboured some hope of destroying the bridges by floating felled trees upon them, and possibly of cutting off the French detachment upon the western bank. He was not however disposed, as were many of his subordinates, to make any stroke for the relief of Ciudad Rodrigo until he knew the full resources of the enemy and was assured that his efforts might be successful; and so he informed the Governor. He reckoned the force before him at fifty thousand men, which was very little above its real strength;<sup>2</sup> whereas he could collect only thirty-six thousand, of whom

<sup>1</sup> Wellington's memos. of 27th and 28th May.

<sup>2</sup> Ney's troops numbered about thirty thousand men, and Junot's about seventeen thousand, of which about nine thousand were within one day's, and the remainder within two days' march.

fifteen thousand were Portuguese and three thousand 1810. Spaniards of Romana's army under Don Martin Carrera, which last lay high up towards the sources of the Agueda. Moreover, to relieve Ciudad Rodrigo it was necessary to quit the mountains and enter the plains, where the numerical superiority of the French cavalry would place them at great advantage. Lastly, time was more valuable to both parties than was Ciudad Rodrigo, though Wellington knew it, and Massena did not. The slowness of the French in opening the siege amazed the British Commander. "This is not the way," he wrote, "in which they have conquered Europe."<sup>1</sup>

At last on the 15th of June the French broke ground, and on the 25th opened fire from forty-eight June 25. pieces. The Spaniards defended themselves gallantly and effectively, blowing up one of the French magazines and dismounting several of their guns ; but nevertheless the balance of the fight was on the whole against them. On the same day Wellington advanced his headquarters to Alverca, still keeping a garrison in Fort Concepcion, and maintaining Craufurd's outposts on the Azava in almost dangerous proximity to the enemy with the hope of finding some chance to relieve the beleaguered city ; but he gave the Governor clearly to understand that he would take no great risks for him. Nevertheless, the audacity of the Light Division made Massena apprehensive of some attempt ; and on the 4th of July he July 4. sent a division of dragoons and a brigade of infantry to make a reconnaissance in force. An hour before daylight they drove in the picquet of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, two squadrons of which had recently relieved as many of the German Hussars ; but every dragoon was brought safely into Gallegos, where the infantry of the Light Division was already assembled. The whole then fell back, covered by the guns of Ross's troop of

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Craufurd, 6th, 8th, 10th June ; to Herrasti, Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, 6th June ; to Hill, 9th June ; to H. Wellesley, 11th, 20th June 1810.

1810. Horse Artillery,<sup>1</sup> towards Fort Concepcion ; the German Hussars checking the French by a timely charge at the foot of the first ravine that lay on the road, and enabling the infantry and guns to form on the ridge above. The French pressed on close enough to the infantry to draw from them a volley, which arrested their further progress ; and the Division then withdrew quietly across the Dos Casas and Turones, leaving the cavalry between the two rivers to cover a line from Fuentes de Oñoro to Aldea del Obispo. The whole affair was admirably managed ; the British cavalry, though opposed throughout by five times its numbers, losing only five men and four horses killed and wounded, whereas the French suffered heavily both from the charges and from the fire of Ross's guns. Captain Krauchenberg of the German Hussars was the guiding spirit, proving himself not for the first time to be an admirable officer ; and he with his brave squadron received the special thanks of Wellington for their good service.<sup>2</sup>

The thrusting back of the British advanced posts practically sealed the fate of Ciudad Rodrigo, which, after a most gallant defence, surrendered on the evening July 10. of the 10th. Wellington, meanwhile, had on the evening of the 4th reinforced Craufurd with the Fourteenth Light Dragoons ; and Craufurd, observing French patrols and foraging parties among the villages to the east of the Dos Casas, resolved to read them a lesson. Accordingly, on the night of the 10th, while still unaware of the fate of Ciudad Rodrigo, he led out one squadron of German Hussars and five of British Light Cavalry,<sup>3</sup> seven companies of infantry, and two guns,

<sup>1</sup> The Chestnut troop had joined the Light Division at the end of June.

<sup>2</sup> Tomkinson, pp. 28-29 ; Beamish, i. 274-278.

<sup>3</sup> Krauchenberg's of 1st Hussars, K.G.L. ; 2 squadrons 16th L.D., 3 squadrons 14th L.D., 2 cos./52nd, 7 cos./95th. Mr. Oman states the infantry as the whole of the 43rd and 95th, besides a battalion of Caçadores. All the accounts except two—those of Leach and Simmons—vary as to the infantry that was present on this occasion. I have followed these two.

with all possible silence and secrecy, across the Dos Casas 1810. towards Villa de Puerco, near which he left the infantry and guns hidden in high standing corn, and concealed the cavalry half a mile from them. At daylight a party of thirty or forty horsemen was seen moving towards Barquilla; and Craufurd, fearful lest they should escape, formed the cavalry into column of half-troops and led them forward at the trot. In his eagerness to take the shortest way he guided the squadrons into a narrow stony defile, which of course broke up their formation; and as they emerged from it, Krauchenberg, who was leading the column, perceived the glimmer of bayonets upon some rising ground in the growing rye ahead. He at once informed the General of the fact. "Charge them," answered Craufurd, and hurried the squadron on without giving the disordered men time to form line. Krauchenberg accordingly advanced, whereupon the bayonets suddenly disappeared, the French having evidently received the order to lie down. They rose, however, when the hussars were within fifty yards, revealing a square of from two to three hundred men, and fired a volley which killed or wounded ten horses and eleven men. Only half of the squadron had charged, however, and Krauchenberg was about to attack with the other half while the French were reloading, when Craufurd ordered him to leave the infantry and fall on the cavalry beyond them. The Germans therefore opened out right and left and rode on. The Sixteenth, who were following next to them, appear to have seen the French cavalry but not the infantry, and, passing wide of the square, they received, together with the Germans, the surrender of thirty-five French dragoons. The Fourteenth then came up, when Craufurd halted the leading squadron, and, without waiting for the rest, ordered it to charge the French square. The Colonel, Talbot, an excellent officer, accordingly led it forward; the French received the attack with admirable steadiness, and Talbot fell dead among the French bayonets together with eight of his men. Twenty-three more of



1810. the troopers were wounded, many of them by the steel ; and the survivors, heavily repulsed in spite of a gallant onset, passed on into the already disordered ranks of the Germans and Sixteenth. The two remaining squadrons of the Fourteenth were forming to attack when yet another party of horse was seen galloping up in a cloud of dust from Barquilla, and was, from the appearance of other French parties in the same quarter, judged to be French. As a matter of fact, it was a detachment of German Hussars which had been posted in a farmhouse to cut off the retreat of the French, and was hurrying up, pursuant to its orders, at the sound of the firing. However, the two squadrons which had not been engaged were moved off to meet them, whereupon the commander of the French infantry, Captain Gouache, seized the moment to run with his men into an adjacent wood, whence he withdrew them safely over the river to his own people. He was very deservedly promoted by Massena for his conduct.

On the English side the whole affair was abominably mishandled, entirely through the fault of Craufurd. He had not the slightest idea of the strength of the French infantry when he ordered Krauchenberg to attack, though he could have ascertained it approximately in a few minutes ; and instead of forming the whole of his squadrons for a simultaneous onslaught, he launched them into action piecemeal upon one face only of the square, and even then so hurriedly that he allowed no time for the rear files to take their places in the line. The troopers had to ascend the hill to the charge ; no disadvantage in an attack on infantry, if properly utilised ; and the corn was a heavy crop reaching almost to the knees of the men.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible, therefore, that horses should go through it at high speed, and this was the greater reason for careful though rapid arrangement of the method of attack. If Craufurd had even shown the whole of his force of cavalry, the French would probably have surrendered. If he

<sup>1</sup> Tomkinson, p. 30.

had brought up part of his infantry or his guns—and 1810. they could have joined him in twenty minutes—the enemy would hardly have thought of resistance. The fact of the matter is that Craufurd lost his head, and it should seem that he made the rest of his people lose theirs also. The losses did not exceed thirty-two of all ranks, and as many horses killed and wounded ; but the affair was discreditable and led to bad feeling between regiments, which it needed all Wellington's firmness to compose.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo had, as Wellington put it, placed the British army in a new situation. Martin Carrera in deep disgust announced that he should draw off his Spanish troops, and Wellington warned Craufurd that, as soon as they should be gone, there would no longer be any occasion for the Light Division to remain far to the front of Almeida. He therefore particularly desired him to fall back behind the Coa in the event of the French advancing in force. "I do not wish to risk anything on the Coa," he wrote on the 11th. "I do not wish to risk anything in order to remain on the other side of the river or retain Fort Concepcion," he repeated on the 16th. "I am not desirous of engaging in an affair beyond the Coa," he wrote for the third time on the 19th; "if you are not covered from the sun, would it not be better that you should come to this side with your infantry at least?" However, Massena was to Wellington's mind strangely slow in moving, and it was not until the 21st of July July 21. that, having replenished his supplies and stores, he pushed Ney's corps forward against Craufurd's line of posts. Craufurd thereupon reluctantly retired, blowing up Fort Concepcion, obedient to Wellington's orders, and fell back to Junça, about three miles to south of Almeida and on the same ridge with it ; while Ney halted at Val

<sup>1</sup> Accounts of this affair are to be found in Tomkinson, pp. 30-31 ; Leach, pp. 140-141 ; Costello, pp. 34-35 ; Simmons, pp. 73-74 ; Napier's *Life of Sir G. Napier*, i. 132 ; Beamish, i. 279-281 ; Wellington's Despatches (ed. 1852), iv. 164-167, 179.

1810. de Mula between three and four miles to Craufurd's left front. For two days the Light Division remained thus in face of an entire French corps ; but Craufurd, in the teeth of Wellington's orders, made no attempt to cross the Coa, and on the third day Ney resolved to chastise him for his temerity.

The ridge upon which Almeida stands forms the western boundary of the great upraised plain of Leon, the altitude of the town above the sea exceeding two thousand feet. The summit is broad, flat, and sound, an ideal country for cavalry, and to eastward the upland rolls away in broad billows which are furrowed by little rapid streams. But on the westward side of the fortress the ground plunges down rapidly to the gorge of the Coa ; the distance from the walls to the river in a direct line being almost three thousand yards, and the difference in height over three hundred feet. The whole of this hillside is seamed by hollows, about three in every mile of ground, each carrying its trickle of water to the sea. From the southern face of the fortification there descends to the Coa a road, narrow and fairly steep indeed, but by no means bad, being for the most part paved and enclosed between fairly high stone walls. It would, however, be too slippery for horses to descend it safely at high speed, particularly after rain. This road follows a leading spur<sup>1</sup> very nearly to its foot ; and the final descent to the bridge, upon which Craufurd's salvation depended, is a comparatively

<sup>1</sup> As this very useful colonial expression may be unknown to English readers, I should perhaps explain it. Any range of hills running say from north to south, such as the ridge of Almeida, pours off its liquid or frozen waters to east and west. These tributary waters dig furrows on their way to some central channel—in this instance the Coa—which generally runs parallel to the ridge. The spaces between these furrows are termed spurs, and a leading spur is one which runs directly into the main channel uninterrupted by any cross tributary, or by the junction of two tributaries. It descends, that is to say, in an unbroken slope, whereas a spur that is not a leading spur may lead one across a labyrinth of waters, each one of these involving steep ascent or descent.

easy slope. The ridges immediately to right and left <sup>1810.</sup> of the leading spur both tend to converge upon the bridge. The ground along the upper part of the declivity is broken by countless vineyards, high walls, and little enclosures, but the soil steadily becomes poorer as the water is approached. The rock crops up more and more thickly through the heather and broom, the enclosures become less frequent, and for the last few hundred yards the ground is open and the rock is everywhere. At a short distance from the water the road for wheeled traffic is forced aside by many obstacles, and after turning for a little way up-stream, doubles back to its final access to the bridge. But for men and pack-animals the track leads perfectly straight down, and upon each flank of this final descent to the bridge rise two rocky knolls, covered with heather and broom. The Coa itself is a boiling torrent which, at the point where the road touches it, has cleft its way through the rock and turned the valley into a chasm. The bridge consists of two lofty arches, and the roadway runs nearly forty feet above the highest flood mark. The left or western bank offers above the bridge a fairly easy slope, which becomes far steeper below; immediately opposite to the bridge itself it presents a sheer cliff over one hundred feet high.

The night of the 23rd was stormy and wet, but the July 23. enemy early showed themselves in great strength above Fort Concepcion and San Pedro; and the fact was faithfully reported by Craufurd's vedettes. Wellington's orders were that, even upon the threat of the enemy's advance in force, Craufurd was to retire across the Coa; and, when the alarm was first given, there was still plenty of time to draw off the cavalry and send them over the river. But it was not to be. Robert Craufurd must needs play what he conceived to be the part of a great commander. Ney, observing his false dispositions, had turned out the whole of his corps to overwhelm him, and twenty-five thousand men were advancing upon the Light Division. Still Craufurd kept his cavalry

1810. out, and formed his line of battle athwart the slope July 23. of the hill, with his left from five to seven hundred yards south of Almeida, resting on the tower of a ruined windmill, which was held by half a company of the Fifty-second. Here also were stationed two of Ross's guns. Next to them were the Forty-third, and then in succession the Ninety-fifth, the 1st Caçadores, 3rd Caçadores and Fifty-second,<sup>1</sup> the whole line covering a front of above a mile and a half in a convex form, with its right not far from the river.

From two to three hours, if not more, seem to have passed before Ney's corps was finally deployed for action, ample time for Craufurd to have sent at any rate his baggage, artillery, and most of his cavalry across the river. But when the Marshal at length advanced to the attack he did so rapidly. The cavalry, showing a line of fifteen squadrons irrespective of skirmishers, sent the British horse and Ross's advanced guns flying back over the plain for shelter,<sup>2</sup> where Craufurd caught them up, and with singular fatuity formed them in rear of the windmill. The French infantry were now seen moving onward with astonishing speed, and Craufurd began to lose his head. He pulled his troops about, ordering some forward and others back, and finally penned half of the Forty-third into an enclosure near the road, within walls considerably higher than their heads, and with only one narrow outlet. Presently the first of the French skirmishers came up and fell upon an advanced post of the Ninety-fifth among the enclosures; whereupon O'Hara's company of the same regiment, supported by a wing of the Fifty-second, was sent forward to bring the forlorn riflemen in. While these two companies were hotly engaged with the infantry in front, a squadron of the French hussars,

<sup>1</sup> This is the order given by Moorhouse in the *History of the Fifty-second*, and was probably correct at one moment of the day, though not for long. Possibly only one wing of the 52nd was on the right flank from the beginning.

<sup>2</sup> Some of Krauchenberg's hussars were cut off from Almeida, but found their way down to the river and swam their horses over it.

disdaining the fire from the guns of Almeida, swept <sup>1810.</sup> down upon their flank and nearly made an end of July 23. O'Hara's.<sup>1</sup> Craufurd now recalled the wing of the Fifty-second into the enclosures, and the whole of Loison's thirteen battalions came gradually into action, striking first and hardest against the British left, which, being nearest to the top of the hill, was the earliest to be encountered. The engagement became fierce and general, and very soon the British commander perceived how great was his peril. He therefore ordered his three British battalions to hold fast to their positions, till he could pass the remainder of the force across the bridge, and then to retire in echelon from the left. Orders appear to have been sent at the same time to the Fifty-second to stick obstinately to their ground on the right flank.

From that moment the regimental officers took matters into their own hands. With a numerical superiority of four or five to one, the French pressed the attack with extreme vigour, while the British troops, using every opportunity which the ground afforded, opposed them with rare tenacity. The latter, however, were at a disadvantage, for in order to retire they had to throw down the dry stone walls of the enclosures, while the French could make use of these openings to follow them rapidly. Moreover, the British companies dared not stand for too long in any one position, lest their flank should be turned and their retreat to the bridge cut off; for already the French hussars were hurrying down the road and sabring every man that they met. Meanwhile the guns and cavalry had passed the pinfold where the wing of the Forty-third was herded, and the Caçadores were likewise tramping down the road, when the officers of the Forty-third within, losing patience, called upon their men with a great effort to heave down the wall,

<sup>1</sup> This is what I make of this incident, putting together the accounts of Costello, Kincaid, Simmons, and Charles Napier, but I am aware that it differs from Mr. Oman's account.

1810. and having thus freed themselves, threw their com-  
July 23. panies into the fight. Thus the contest was maintained,  
a battle of skirmishers, not of ranked lines, but none  
the less of the hottest, and made the more trying for  
the British as the French guns unlimbered on the crest  
of the hill and poured shot down upon them. Gradually  
the left of Craufurd's line was forced back to the  
bridge, while the passage was still choked by cavalry  
and artillery; and the confusion was increased by the  
upsetting of an ammunition-waggon. The French  
were speeding swiftly on, but the British General gave  
no orders. Major McLeod of the Forty-third, how-  
ever, rallied four companies to hold one of the knolls  
which commanded the passage, while Brigade-Major  
Rowan of the Ninety-fifth posted two companies of  
Rifles on the other. Other troops formed upon these,  
and, the river being in heavy flood, the passage was  
thus kept open for the men of the left wing. They  
had no sooner crossed the river than Craufurd ordered  
the troops posted by Rowan on the southern knoll  
to withdraw; forgetting half a battalion of the Fifty-  
second which was still holding its ground nearly a  
mile up the river, and had never been recalled.  
Happily, Colonel Beckwith of the Rifles kept his wits  
about him and sent Charles Napier in search of these;  
but in the interval the French assembled in great  
numbers, made a rush at McLeod's post and drove  
his men back. The danger was extreme, for the  
bridge was still encumbered by troops; but McLeod,  
instantly rallying his men, led them forward to a  
counter-attack. Fired by his example, the Forty-third  
and Riflemen sprang to the onset as if a whole army  
were at their backs, recovered the hill and dislodged  
the French from a wall beyond it with such spirit as  
to daunt them from any further attempt. The Fifty-  
second at length appeared and crossed the bridge; the  
rear-guard followed them at the top of their speed; and  
Craufurd's division, thanks not to him but to his  
officers and men, passed safely to the western bank,

having left not even the overturned ammunition-waggon behind them.<sup>1</sup>

1810.  
July 23.

Even then the General appears not immediately to have realised that the bridge must be defended still, for the first and most urgent dispositions for securing it were left to Charles Napier, with such mixed men of all regiments as he could collect. But presently Craufurd recovered himself. Ross's guns were already unlimbered on the upper slopes of the hill. The infantry was soon scattered in loose order along the lower slopes; a company of Rifles was posted by its captain in a ruined house which commanded the bridge; and the cavalry was sent off to watch the fords of Castello Bom, six miles to south, lest the enemy should cross the river there and cut off the Light Division from the main army. And now arrived the time for the French in their turn to make mistakes.

Very shortly after the British had accomplished their retreat, the French skirmishers came down to the water's edge, taking cover behind the rocks, and engaged in a duel with their rivals on the opposite bank, while the guns thundered at each other across the valley. Ney, however, after trying in vain to find a ford in the still rising stream, ordered the Grenadiers of the 66th to carry the bridge. The column was quickly formed, and rushed gallantly forward. Correct judgment of distance from the top of a sheer height to the plain below is proverbially difficult, and the French traversed two-thirds of the passage unhurt before the British marksmen found the range. Then the leaders fell as one man; the rear sections, as fast as they came up, were mown down in masses, till their prostrate bodies rose almost to the height of the parapet, and the attack was repulsed with very heavy loss. Ney's blood, however, was up. He now directed<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The half company of the Fifty-second was indeed cut off and left behind in the windmill; but the officer, Lieut. Dawson, very cunningly waited till night, when he drew off his men unobserved and brought them safely to Pinhel.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Oman, iii. 263, shows that Ney himself was responsible.



1810. a battalion of picked marksmen, three hundred strong, July 23. to take the place of the 66th; and the same scene was repeated. The French dashed forward with unsurpassable bravery, only to be shot down in heaps. Ten or a dozen men actually succeeded in reaching the farther bank, where they found safety without difficulty in dead ground; but four-fifths of the remainder were killed and wounded, a pitiful sacrifice of heroic and devoted soldiers. Still not contented, Ney essayed yet a third attempt with more men of the 66th, which could not but be half-hearted; and then the fight reduced itself once more to a duel of cannon and muskets across the valley. At last, at four o'clock the rain fell in torrents, effectually forbidding any further fire; the French who had passed the river hurried back to their comrades; and the combat of the Coa, as sharp a fight, on its own scale, as was seen in the course of the war, came to an end.

The loss of the French amounted to five hundred and twenty killed and wounded, the greater part of them thrown wantonly away in the reckless assaults on the bridge. That of the British was three hundred and thirty-three killed, wounded, and missing, two-thirds of whom belonged to the Forty-third and Ninety-fifth, the Fifty-second escaping very lightly;<sup>1</sup> and among the wounded were two men who were later to become famous, William Napier of the Forty-third, and Harry Smith of the Rifles. Though the surviving accounts of the action on the British side are many, there is

<sup>1</sup> Casualties—

	KILLED.		WOUNDED.		MISSING.	
	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
1/43rd . . . . .	3	15	10	86	0	15 = 129
1/52nd . . . . .	0	1	2	16	0	3 = 22
1/95th . . . . .	1	11	8	55	1	53 = 129
Portuguese (2 batts.) .	0	4	1	24	0	2 = 45
Cavalry (2 regts.) . .	0	1	1	3	0	2 = 7
					Total	<u>333</u>

much about it that remains difficult of explanation ; 1810. and it should seem that the French officers were slow July 23. to apprehend the true state of affairs, otherwise Ney should entirely have annihilated Craufurd's division. For this, however, they had every excuse ; since, until they actually arrived at the brow of the hill and looked down over it, they could not see how the British were disposed ; and by that time the atmosphere must have been thick with smoke. It is probable that at the outset Craufurd formed his line upon the plain, showing a front, roughly speaking, towards the east, and that the French accordingly marched westward straight upon it. Hence, when the British General changed front more or less to the south, the French, unable to see the movement, preserved the same direction and so struck the British line obliquely, grazing it rather than striking a full blow. Had they closed with Craufurd's right at the same time as with his left, they must have overwhelmed the Fifty-second and reached the bridge before the British main body ; whereas the Fifty-second actually came off with only twenty-two casualties. From Val de Mula, which was the line of Ney's advance, there is a rough road leading straight to Junça and from thence to the bridge of Almeida, the track following the river downward for the last mile. The entire distance does not exceed seven or eight miles ; and it is therefore evident that if Ney had chosen to send a column by this road—and the ground would have served well to screen the manœuvre—he could have thrown it into action as soon as the main body. In such a case it is hard to say how Craufurd could have escaped disaster.

As to the General himself it is sufficient to say that, over and above his disobedience to orders in fighting at all, he made every mistake that a commander could make ; perhaps the worst of all being that he omitted at the first to send some of his guns across the water to secure his retreat. They would have been for long out of range of the French artillery and might have

1810. wrought havoc among the enemy's infantry. But Craufurd had evidently no idea of retiring. He seems to have kept his advanced posts out far too long ; and, when his cavalry and artillery were driven from the plain, he packed them away where they could be of no service, finally hurrying them over the bridge so late that, before they could cross it, the infantry fell back upon them. Beyond any question he lost all control of the fight very early, and was saved from disaster only by his regimental officers. It was a pity, for while holding the line of outposts he had done superlative service ; but there is no contesting the fact that Craufurd was rarely at his best in action.<sup>1</sup>

Wellington was extremely and rightly annoyed at his subordinate's escapade, but he accepted his report of it and transmitted it to England without comment. Only to his brother, Wellesley Pole, did he reveal the full measure of his vexation not only over the combat of the Coa but over the other "foolish affairs in which Craufurd had involved his outposts." Yet he added, "If I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man who, I believe, has meant well, and whose error is one of judgment and not of intention ; and indeed I must add that, although my errors and those of others also are visited heavily upon me, that is not the way in which any, much less a British, army can be commanded." There spoke a true ruler of men, who knows—what representative assemblies can rarely

<sup>1</sup> Careful accounts, more or less detailed, of the combat of the Coa will be found in William Napier's *Battles and Sieges of the Peninsula*, *Life of Sir G. Napier* ; Harry Smith's *Autobiography* ; Kincaid's *Random Shots from a Rifleman*, Leach's *Rough Sketches* ; Verner's *A British Rifleman* ; Sir G. Napier's *Early Military Life* ; Costello's *Adventures of a Soldier* ; Levinge's *Historical Records of the 43rd* ; Moorhouse's *History of the 52nd*. A great many of these witnesses were hostile to Craufurd, with whom Mr. Oman deals very gently. What I find unpardonable in him is that, offering battle against orders, he had evidently not in the slightest degree thought out how he was to receive it. It is certain that there was unnecessary and avoidable confusion ; and all the troops were sore at being mishandled, cavalry as well as infantry.

grasp — that a chief must not be extreme to mark what is done amiss by an honest and zealous subordinate. With all his faults Craufurd was a really good soldier ; and it behoved a wise commander to make the best of him. Moreover, Craufurd had not been the only officer to misbehave himself on this occasion. Before the action was ended Picton rode up alone, attracted by the sound of firing, and was asked by Craufurd for the assistance of his division. The said division ought to have been already nearing the spot, for it had been stationed where it was for the express purpose of supporting Craufurd if the latter were hard beset ; and the situation of the Light Division at the moment was undoubtedly perilous. Yet Picton, greatly to his dishonour, refused the request ; and after an exchange of sharp words, for both men had bad tempers and neither refinement, the two Generals parted. Had Wellington, therefore, censured Craufurd's disobedience, he must also have noticed Picton's ; each would have defended himself and incriminated the other ; there would have been a Picton's party and a Craufurd's party in the army, and consequently bad feeling and division. Wellington, therefore, wisely let the matter rest. Be the discipline of an army never so stern, men and officers are flesh and blood, and need tact as well as firmness for their right government.<sup>1</sup>

In the French army the affair was handled according to the methods of the Bonapartist Empire. Ney, who was fully as insubordinate as Craufurd without the latter's undoubted reverence for his Chief, wrote as true an account of the engagement as his rival, and returned a correct statement of his losses. Massena thereupon garbled the report, multiplying the British prisoners taken by four, adding to this the capture of a colour, and reducing the French casualties from five hundred to three hundred. To this he appended some inventions, purporting to be taken from intercepted despatches,

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 25th July ; to Wellesley Pole, 31st July 1810.

1810. which stated the British losses at sixty officers and eleven hundred killed and wounded. His despatch was duly printed in the *Moniteur*, and, having thus received the stamp of certain untruth, passed presently over to England to be accepted as gospel by the leaders of the Opposition. After several weeks it found its way into the hands of Craufurd, who at once wrote an indignant vindication of his conduct, asserting that the Light Division had, in face of six times its numbers, performed one of the most difficult operations of war. This was true ; but the writer did not add that if the orders of the Commander-in-Chief had been obeyed, no such operation would have been necessary ; and the inference to be drawn was, therefore, that Wellington was to blame for the mishap. To do him justice, Craufurd probably never dreamed of dragging his Chief into the affair ; but it was the misfortune of this quick-tempered, "black-muzzled"<sup>1</sup> little man that he could never think of any one but himself.

<sup>1</sup> No portrait of Craufurd exists, nor any physical description of him except a few words of Harry Smith which depict him as he appeared in a high-peaked saddle. "Over this peak Craufurd's black muzzle could hardly be discovered (he was a short man) so entrenched was he" (*Autobiography*, i. 177).

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

ON the night of the 24th the Light Division continued <sup>1810.</sup> its retreat to Pinhel, from which quarter Picton's <sup>July 24.</sup> division retired on the 26th. Craufurd then established his advanced guard at Freixedas and Vendada on the direct road from Almeida to the Mondego, and Cotton with the cavalry division took general charge of the line of outposts. Massena, however, showed no sign of undertaking the siege of Almeida; and Wellington, deprived of Spanish intelligence since the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, was left in painful suspense as to the enemy's intentions. General Reynier had passed the Tagus at the ferry of Alconetar, and on the 20th was at Plasencia. Hill, pursuant to his orders, had likewise crossed the river at Villa Velha, arriving on the 20th at Castello Branco and on the 23rd at Átalaia, within two marches of Wellington's right. But here Wellington halted him; for on the 27th Reynier's vanguard came <sup>July 27.</sup> through the pass of Perales, as if heading straight upon Ciudad Rodrigo; and the British Commander, considering this fact in conjunction with an advance of Junot's corps to the Agueda and Massena's inexplicable apathy as to Almeida, concluded that the Marshal intended to mask that fortress and make a sudden dash upon the Allies with the bulk of his force, so as to render their retreat as difficult as possible. On the 27th he therefore withdrew the whole of his army to the valley of the Mondego, with headquarters at Celorico, leaving Cole's division only in observation at Guarda, and warning Hill to be ready to retire independently.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to H. Wellesley, 19th July; to Hill, 20th, 27th July; to C. Stuart, 23rd, 29th July; to Liverpool, 1st Aug. 1810.

1810. The alarm proved to be false. Reynier's excursion through the pass of Perales has been made simply for purposes of foraging and reconnaissance. The next appearance of his troops was at Salvaterra on the west bank of the Elja, and actually within Portuguese territory; and
- July 31. again, a few days later, a detachment entered Penamacor. The fact was that Reynier had received orders from Massena to keep Hill occupied in the south and to prevent him from joining Wellington; and most effectually he fulfilled these commands. However, the interception of Napoleon's despatches gave Wellington the clue to all these manœuvres; and, after not a little marching and counter-marching before Atalaia and
- Aug. 3. Sarzedas, Hill finally fixed his headquarters on the 3rd of August at the latter place, pushing his cavalry, under General Fane, well forward to watch the Second Corps. More than once the Portuguese horse came into collision with the French during August, twice gaining credit-
- Aug. 13. able little successes; and by the 13th Wellington had made up his mind that Reynier's movement to north of the Tagus, though ordered by Napoleon himself, was a false one, and that the sooner he recrossed the river, the better for the French.<sup>1</sup>

But while passing this criticism the British General could not find in it comfort against another danger, which now threatened him from the south-east. Napoleon's commands, it will be remembered, had also directed Mortier to move up to Estremadura and to take Reynier's place south of the Tagus. Wellington had long ago divined that some such design was probable; but, at the moment when the Emperor's plans were revealed to him, he did not think that it would be executed, knowing that General Lacy was at the time engaged in the raid upon Ronda already narrated. When, however, he learned of Lacy's feeble abandonment of the expedition, Wellington made up his mind to Mortier's immediate advance; and in fact the Duke of Treviso had, by Soult's orders, detached Girard's division at the be-

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Hill, 13th August 1810.

ginning of August to manœuvre along the whole length 1810.  
of the Portuguese frontier from the Sierra Morena to the Guadiana. Girard accordingly marched against Ballesteros, his most formidable enemy in that quarter, who led him a weary zig-zag chase; retiring first to Fregenal, then north-west to Jerez de los Caballeros, thence north-east to Burguillos, north-westward again to Salvatierra, and finally doubling back south-eastward to Zafra. At this point on the 8th, Girard gave up his task in despair, left his adversary to pursue his way to Olivenza, and himself fell back on the 9th to Llerena. Aug. 9.

No tactics could have been better fitted to meet the case than those of Ballesteros, for they wore out the French troops with hard marching to no purpose. But unfortunately on reaching Olivenza he met Romana, who, in the teeth of Wellington's warnings and entreaties, had insisted upon sallying from Badajoz to take the offensive in Andalusia. On the 10th the Marquis reached Bienvenida; but on the following day Girard marched out to attack him, and, catching Aug. 11.  
his advanced guard unsupported, completely defeated it with a loss of six hundred men. Romana thereupon retreated hurriedly towards Merida; and Soult, reinforcing Girard, was urgent for an attempt upon Badajoz. But before the movement could take place, the Duke of Dalmatia was alarmed by Lacy's descent upon Huelva, which compelled him to weaken Girard by recalling troops of the Fifth Corps to meet the diversion. The danger of a French advance through Estremadura upon the Allies, therefore, vanished for the present, greatly to the relief of Wellington. He had sent a brigade of Portuguese cavalry to reinforce Romana, but it arrived too late to be of service; and he was thankful that the Marquis had escaped with comparatively slight loss, particularly as there might now be some chance of his learning the elements of prudence.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously with this distraction in the south Wellington learned that the detachment of General

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Hill, 9th Aug.; to C. Stuart, 12th Aug. 1810.



1810. Séras, as Napoleon had directed, was assembling between the city of Leon and the Douro to threaten Portugal from the north-east. Séras in fact set out  
July 29. on the 27th of July, from Benavente ; on the 29th he drove a feeble Spanish force from Puebla de Sanabria, where he left a garrison of six hundred men, and a few days later returned to Zamora. General Silveira promptly collected the Portuguese militia to guard the frontier ; and, upon the retreat of Séras, joined his troops to a party of Spaniards, with which he attacked  
Aug. 4. the garrison at Puebla de Sanabria on the 4th of August, and after a week's blockade compelled it to surrender. Séras hurriedly marched back to the town on hearing of its danger, but, arriving too late, found that both his garrison and his enemy had disappeared ; after which, being presently summoned to Asturias by Bonnet, he took no further part in the principal campaign.

But Wellington's anxieties at this period were not bounded by his operations in the field. It was just at this moment that he learned of the appointment of three new members to the Regency at Lisbon, namely the Principal de Souza, the Count of Redondo, and Dr. Raymundo Nogueira, a professor at the University at Coimbra. One and all of these persons were distasteful to him, because he foresaw, not incorrectly, that they would oppose and intrigue against Forjaz, to whom all his faith was pinned for the salvation of Portugal ; and he blamed both the Regent's Government at Brazil and the British Ambassador at his court for making so mischievous a selection. However, he bowed loyally to the inevitable, and found some comfort in the fact that a seat on the Council of Regency was offered also to Mr. Charles Stuart, who, upon the strong recommendation of the General himself, accepted it. Again, Wellington was strongly at variance with the Cabinet in London over the policy of obtaining for British subjects the privilege of trading direct to Brazil, which had indeed improved the British revenue but had also impoverished that of Portugal and, as a natural consequence,

brought not a little unpopularity at a very critical time upon the British authorities in Lisbon. Lastly, the General had been disappointed in the matter of reinforcements. No troops, as we have seen, could be spared from Sicily ; and besides this, only one of the two battalions promised from Halifax had arrived, the other having been detained until it could be relieved by a third battalion from England.<sup>1</sup> Liverpool, however, though as yet Wellington knew it not, had already remedied this by ordering Graham to send him two battalions and a squadron from Cadiz. Moreover, unexpected help had come from Spain in the shape of Julian Sanchez's body of cavalry, which had slipped out of Ciudad Rodrigo when the fall of that town became imminent, and had been taken into British pay. Still, in spite of all such consolations, the first fortnight of August was a most trying time for Wellington alike in front, flanks, and rear.<sup>2</sup>

The suspense was ended with the investment of Almeida by Ney's corps on the 15th, after long delay in the arrival of the siege-train. The place was of small extent, nearly circular, with a diameter of about seven hundred yards ; a neat little fortress of six bastions, a covered way, a dry ditch cut out of the solid rock, and six lunettes. Its strong point was that the earth lay so thin on the rock all round it as to make the construction of approaches very difficult ; its weak points were that the glacis, owing likewise to poverty of earth, was too low, leaving the walls much exposed, and that the magazine was inadequately protected. The commandant, Brigadier Cox, was a capable and resolute man ; the garrison numbered close upon five thousand Portuguese, nearly half of

<sup>1</sup> 1/7th arrived from Halifax at the end of July ; the 23rd awaiting the arrival of 2/8th before sailing. Liverpool on the 3rd of August ordered Graham to send Wellington the 79th, 94th, and one squadron 13th L.D. without waiting for Wellington's requisition.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 1st, 8th Aug. ; to C. Stuart, 3rd, 4th Aug. ; to H. Wellesley, 10th Aug. 1810.

1810. them regular troops, and the remainder militia ; the fortifications mounted over one hundred guns, and there was abundance of supplies and stores. A semaphore signal-post enabled communications to be maintained with the Allied army ; and altogether Almeida seemed likely to detain Massena for a couple of months.

In order to force the Marshal to keep his troops together, and so to make the feeding of them the more difficult, Wellington moved the divisions of

Aug. 20. Picton and Craufurd slightly forward and advanced his headquarters again to Alverca. The progress of the French approaches was not rapid ; but the first parallel and eleven batteries upon it were completed

Aug. 26. within ten days ; and fire was opened on the 26th. No very serious damage had been done after twelve hours' cannonade, when at seven o'clock in the evening a lucky shell kindled a train of powder which had leaked from a barrel in its passage from the stores, and blew up the magazine. In a few seconds the town was practically destroyed, though the circle of defences remained unharmed. The loss of life among the garrison was not great, considering the circumstances, five hundred men only having perished ; but these included half of the gunners in the fortress, while the explosion had deprived the place of all ammunition

Aug. 27. for the guns. On the following morning Massena sent in an officer to demand surrender of the fortress. Cox put a bold face on matters and tried to gain time ; but, during the parley, Portuguese officers on Massena's staff came to the foot of the walls adjuring their compatriots within to accept the French proposals ; and that evening a deputation of Cox's officers informed him that, unless he capitulated at once, they would open the gates. The unhappy Cox was forced to yield,

Aug. 28. and on the 28th he and his garrison marched out and laid down their arms ; having, however, obtained from Massena the condition that the regular troops should be sent prisoners to France, and that the militia regiments should be allowed to go to their homes,

upon giving their parole not to serve again throughout the duration of the war. 1810.

Aug. 28.

No sooner had the articles been signed than Massena, after the fashion of his compatriots at Capri, proceeded to violate them. His Portuguese officers were sent among the captives to persuade them to take service under the eagles, and almost the whole of the regulars, both officers and men, besides a large number of the militia, accepted the offer. This event caused Wellington the gravest anxiety. The fall of Almeida through an accident was in itself a disaster which threatened to make havoc of his plans; and now it seemed doubtful whether even the fidelity of the Portuguese army could be counted upon. Happily upon this latter point he was speedily reassured. The prisoners had enlisted in the French service only to escape imprisonment in France, and with every intention of deserting to their own side. They streamed back at once by hundreds at a time to their old colours, and Massena was fain to disarm such few as were left in his camp and send them off to France. The Portuguese Regency approved the conduct of the deserters and reinstated them in the army; whereupon Wellington, after many searchings of heart, decided that Massena's action had nullified the capitulation. He therefore compromised matters by dismissing the escaped militiamen to their homes, and re-forming the regular regiments.

After such a stroke of luck for the French as was the capture of Almeida, Wellington looked for an immediate advance of Massena, and withdrew his headquarters to Celorico; moving the infantry, with the exception of Cole's light companies which remained always at Guarda, into the valley of the Mondego. "Observe Reynier well," he wrote to Hill on the 28th; "his movements will be the clue to everything else." On the 29th Cotton's outposts were driven in from Freixedas, and Reynier's corps was reported to be actually in Sabugal, threatening to advance upon Guarda;

1810. whereupon, Wellington ordered Hill to be ready to  
Sept. 2. fall back upon Thomar. On the 2nd of September  
Cotton's picquets were again thrust back, and Wellington  
withdrew yet another march to the rear, fixing his  
headquarters at Gouvea and leaving only Somers-  
Cocks with a handful of men at Guarda. Twenty-four  
hours more, however, sufficed to set his mind at rest.  
The French made no further reconnaissances; Reynier's  
troops, having made their feint, retired from Sabugal  
to Zarza; and though for a moment Wellington  
conjectured that the Second Corps was designed  
to enter Estremadura and besiege Badajoz, his mis-  
givings were of short duration.<sup>1</sup> The truth is that  
the French were in no condition for an immediate  
advance. As usual Massena had depended upon the  
country for supplies, and he now found that, poverty-  
stricken as it was at the best, it was by this time, thanks  
to Wellington's foresight, absolutely laid bare.<sup>2</sup> Several  
of his convoys from Valladolid had been destroyed by  
guerilla-bands; and he was therefore imperatively com-  
pelled to collect at least a fortnight's provisions before  
he could move. But to carry these supplies he needed  
draught-animals, which he did not possess; and he was  
actually obliged to reduce his guns and ammunition-  
waggons by one-third and to turn over the horses to the  
commissariat-train. Another trouble was the scarcity  
of cartridges for the infantry, owing in great measure  
to the incredible wastefulness of the men;<sup>3</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Cotton and Cole, 29th Aug.; to Hill, 31st Aug., 4th Sept.; to Romana, 6th Sept. 1810. Hill to Wellington, 3rd Sept. 1810. *Wellington MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> Even the British horses had nothing but rye to eat, and were beginning to suffer from it. Cotton to Wellington, 2nd Sept. 1810. *Wellington MSS.*

<sup>3</sup> An intercepted letter dated July from General Eblé to the Minister for War states that the consumption of ammunition was incredible owing to the carelessness of the officers, the inexperience of the men, and the endless demands for escorts for convoys. The infantry expended 900,000 rounds over the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, though no sortie was made by the garrison. As to horses, Eblé complained that the siege-train had over 2000 horses but wanted

deficiency was only made good by manufacturing as many as possible from the scanty store of powder that was taken at Almeida. Lastly, what with sickness, the losses in two sieges, and garrisons for a pair of captured fortresses, his two corps were reduced to forty-five thousand men; and he was therefore obliged to summon Reynier's corps to him and incorporate it with the main army.<sup>1</sup>

The first symptoms of this last arrangement were seen on the 9th, when some of Massena's cavalry appeared at Alfaiates, and felt their way to Sabugal, always keenly watched by Somers-Cocks. On the same day a force of over three thousand men occupied Guarda, but was rightly divined by Wellington to be only a strong reconnoitring party. Reynier began his march from Zarza and Penamacor on the 10th, and entered Alfaiates on the 12th. Hill marked his movements intently, and on the same day retired from Sarzedas to Sobreira Formosa where, finding that Reynier remained stationary, he halted, being ready to cross the Zezere and turn northward upon the Alva when commanded. On the 12th, likewise, General Leith, who was lying at Thomar with two Portuguese brigades and the latest arrived brigade of British, began his journey northward, and by the 15th had set the last of his battalions in motion for the Alva. The whole situation was simplifying itself. Even in Estremadura the troops of the Fifth Corps retired from Llerena, as if to leave Wellington without an enemy except in his front, when the foolish impatience of Romana again threw everything into peril. Unable to resist the temptation

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4000. He added that the battalions of the train had not received their allowance for shoeing and forage, and that the officers had been obliged to use the shirt and shoe allowance of the men to make it good. According to the examination of a French deserter, a sergeant of the 17th Light, Reynier's corps on its march to Sabugal carried every man ten days' biscuit and four days' bread having no transport for victuals except eighty mules for the headquarters staff. Hill to Wellington, 6th Sept. 1810. *Wellington MSS.*

<sup>1</sup> Oman, iii. 342-343.

1810. of a second advance upon Seville, he once more hastened southward, sending out parties in all directions against the isolated French posts, and even capturing one or two of them. In this rash fashion he had penetrated as far as Santa Olalla, not more than forty miles north-west of Seville, when he found himself confronted by a column of the Fifth Corps, which had been sent up by Soult to check him. He fell back at once ; but his  
Sept. 15. cavalry was overtaken by that of Mortier on the 15th at Fuente Cantos, and instantly routed. The entire body would probably have become prisoners but for the arrival of Madden's Portuguese cavalry, which by a brilliant charge was able to extricate them. Romana in his letter to Wellington tried to make light of the whole affair ;<sup>1</sup> but none the less, leaving behind him six guns and five hundred killed and wounded, he hurried back to Merida, where he crossed the Tagus, reinforced the garrison of Badajoz, and left Estremadura to take care of itself. Mortier pursued with his main body as far as Zafra ; and there was once more every appearance of an embarrassing movement against Wellington's right flank and rear. Happily, the absence of Sebastiani's corps in Murcia, and an advance of General Copons about Huelva, left Soult few troops to spare for such a manœuvre, and he was fain to recall the greater part of the Fifth Corps for the protection of Seville.

But misfortunes seldom come singly, and at this time Wellington was even more hampered by his allies than by the French armies. The fall of Almeida had produced a great sensation in Lisbon ; and the Regency, choosing to think that the fortress had, as in the case of Ciudad Rodrigo, been deliberately abandoned to its fate, imagined that this was the right moment to assume the management of the operations. The Principal de Souza therefore called a meeting of the Regency, and put forward a variety of projects for reducing the Portuguese Militia, disbanding the corps at Lisbon, and garrisoning Oporto with some of

<sup>1</sup> Romana to Wellington, 16th Sept. 1810. *Wellington MSS.*

Wellington's troops. He also proposed to obtain an order from the British Government that the British General should take the offensive, maintain the war on the frontier, and consult the Regency as to the disposition of the forces. All this was done behind Stuart's back ; and de Souza's letter to London had actually been written, when Forjaz loyally brought the matter to the knowledge of the British envoy. Stuart detained the ship for three days in order to compose a counterblast to the Principal's absurdities, and then took him and his fellow-mischief-maker, the Patriarch, to task in conversation. De Souza thereupon repeated his plea in favour of an offensive campaign, and went so far as to recommend that the British fleet and transports should quit the Tagus, that Beresford's chief staff-officers should be dismissed, of course in order to give place to creatures of his own, and that assistants should be appointed to watch Forjaz and Wellington's Portuguese Secretary. Stuart was so much incensed by these monstrous propositions that he answered hotly ; whereupon, to use his own expression, the conversation became boisterous. Yet it would be unjust to suppose that the Principal had any idea of treachery. He was simply an extremely conceited and ambitious man, who wanted to control everything in Portugal, and fondly imagined that it was his mission to save his country.

Wellington's answer was short. He would leave the country, he said, and advise the British Government to withdraw its forces, should there be the slightest interference with Beresford's staff, or with the operations of the troops ; and he hinted that, if necessary, he would rid himself of de Souza by summary methods. Further, since the mob of Lisbon seemed likely to abet their foolish leaders in the Regency, he directed the most important of the fortifications to be occupied by British soldiers, and declared that, unless the capital were kept in order, he should embark the army. De Souza, however, had by no means shot



1810. his last bolt. He now instituted a system of  
Sept. domiciliary visits and arrests of suspected persons in Lisbon, which roused Wellington to great indignation ; while, at the same time, he and the Patriarch obstructed every design of the British Commander, whether for depriving the French of the resources of the country, or for saving the Portuguese forces by embarkation in case of mishap. "Principal Souza," wrote Stuart, "is a mountebank with whom, notwithstanding every attempt, I find it impossible to converse reasonably. I have therefore been compelled to frighten him, which is not very difficult, by talking of the general despondency in your army." Thus, by one shift and another, Stuart contrived to impose his will upon the Regency, and to keep the invaluable Forjaz, who was threatening to resign, in his place of Secretary.

It is, however, humiliating to confess that the despondency among the British troops was no fond thing invented by the envoy for his own purposes, but a real and deplorable fact. "There is," wrote Wellington, "a system of croaking in the army, which is highly injurious to the public service, and which I must devise some means of putting an end to, or it will put an end to us." This severe criticism was wrung from Wellington by a letter which an officer of the Guards had sent to a friend in Oporto, giving so terrific an account of the numbers and movements of the French as to throw the whole town into a panic. Yet this offender did but imitate the example set by Generals in the British service, who doubtless thought to magnify their own importance by differing from their chief, but succeeded only in branding themselves as short-sighted and unintelligent.<sup>1</sup>

The accumulation of these annoyances weighed heavily upon the General ; and while groaning under them he poured out his afflicted soul to his brother

<sup>1</sup> Stuart to Wellington, 3rd, 8th, 15th Sept. (*Wellington MSS.*) ; Wellington to Stuart, 11th, 18th Sept. ; to Beresford, 8th Sept. ; to Trant, 11th Aug. 1810.

William. His army was, he said, the worst British 1810. army that ever was sent from England ; and his second- Sept. in-command, whom he had welcomed a few months before, was very unfit for his situation. "He is a good executive officer," Wellington continued, "but has no mind and is incapable of forming any opinions of his own ; and he is the centre of all the vulgar and foolish opinions of the day. . . . I cannot depend upon him for anything. He gives his opinion upon every subject, changes it with the wind, and if any misfortune occurs or the act recommended by him is disapproved of, there is no effort to be looked for from him. . . . With the exception of Beresford I have no assistance. . . . I am left to myself, to my own exertions, to my own execution, the mode of execution, and even the superintendence of that mode, but still I don't despair. . . . Government have behaved with their usual weakness and folly about reinforcements, and I shall get none of those which have been promised to me, but the Duke of Brunswick's infantry instead."<sup>1</sup>

This last complaint was true, for Liverpool's latest letters from England had confirmed the previous disappointments in the matter of reinforcements. The curse of Walcheren still lay heavy upon the battalions at home, and not one of them was fit for active service. Liverpool, therefore, could only authorise the withdrawal of further troops from Cadiz, and send out the infantry of the Duke of Brunswick's corps—the regiment of Brunswick-Oels as it was called, which had been rescued from Germany in 1809—and a batch of drafts. Hence, notwithstanding all untoward appearances, troops poured into Lisbon during September. The Eighty-eighth,<sup>2</sup> sent by mistake from Cadiz but retained by Wellington, was the first to arrive, and enabled the Eighty-third to march northward from Lisbon on the 4th of September. The Seventy-ninth, "a noble battalion," was, as we have seen, actually at Thomar by the 12th ;

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Wellesley Pole, 5th Sept. 1810. *Supp. Desp.* vi. 588. *Wellington MSS.*

<sup>2</sup> 2/88th.

1810. and the squadron of the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, Sept. which came with it, marched to join the rest of the regiment on the 19th. The Brunswick regiment and five hundred drafts reached Lisbon on the 17th, and the Ninety-fourth and a company of the Ninety-fifth, from Cadiz, on the 20th. And this was not all, for on the 10th of September Liverpool wrote to announce that, in view of the importance of securing Portugal, four more battalions,<sup>1</sup> though fever-stricken, should leave England at once ; and he was as good as his word. The Fiftieth, veterans of Vimeiro and Coruña, sailed into the Tagus on the 24th, and the Seventy-first on the 26th ; and although the Thirtieth and Forty-fourth<sup>2</sup> from Cadiz, and the Fourth and Ninety-second from England, as well as two additional companies of artillery, did not come until October, yet Wellington knew that they were on their way. Lastly, by good fortune the remounts of the British cavalry arrived in the nick of time, just as the serious work of the campaign was beginning, and were pronounced by Cotton to be very good. Altogether, great though were Wellington's trials and difficulties at this critical moment, he had also his consolations.<sup>3</sup>

Sept. 15. On the 15th Massena, after leaving some thirty-five hundred men at Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, began his advance with sixty-five thousand men of all ranks, at about the time which Napoleon had prescribed for him. His first movements were puzzling, as was to be expected from so great a master of his art. On the evening of the 15th the Second Corps lay at Guarda, the Sixth at Freixedas, and the Eighth, with the reserve cavalry and artillery behind it, towards Pinhel, giving no clue to Sept. 16. their ultimate route. On the 16th part of the Second

<sup>1</sup> 1/4th, 1/50th, 1/71st, 1/92nd.

<sup>2</sup> 2/30th, 2/44th.

<sup>3</sup> Peacocke to Wellington, 3rd, 17th, 20th, 24th, 26th Sept. ; Graham to Wellington, 24th Sept. ; Liverpool to Wellington, 10th Sept. ; Torrens to Wellington, 11th Sept. ; Cotton to Wellington, 19th Sept. 1810 (*Wellington MSS.*). Wellington to Graham, 15th Sept. 1810 ; Liverpool to Wellington, 2nd Aug. 1810 (*Supp. Desp.* vi. 567).

Corps remained at Guarda, while the rest made for 1810. Celorico, where the Sixth Corps had already arrived, and whence it had sent its cavalry out along several roads; and the Eighth Corps closed up its rear to Pinhel. Still, there was nothing to show whether the advance was to be north or south of the Serra da Estrella; but on the 17th Ney struck westward, and crossed the Sept. 17. Mondego by the bridge of Fornos; the whole of Reynier's corps came up to Celorico; and Junot marched due west along a bad cross-road upon Trancoso. From the first Wellington thought it certain that at least one column would go by way of Vizeu; but the reports of Somers-Cocks and Waters on the 17th had left little doubt that the whole of the army would move by that route, Junot from Trancoso along the northern track, and the remaining corps by the southern and parallel road from Fornos. Massena had decided to reach Coimbra by way of Vizeu, on the north of the Serra da Estrella, and in doing so he had chosen the worst highway in Portugal. It is not difficult to understand why he had made this blunder. He knew that Wellington had thrown up entrenchments on the Alva to bar his advance by the paved road, and his only map was miserably faulty.<sup>1</sup> Portuguese renegades informed him that this paved road, from the multitude of its steep inclines, offered no advantage over any other in the matter of transit, whereas the northern route would not only be easy, but would lead straight to Coimbra, unobstructed by any important position. Wellington on his side surveyed the movement with grim satisfaction. His fortified lines on the Alva were now useless, but he had greater knowledge than Massena's Portuguese officers of the country to north of Coimbra. A party of cavalry was left on the high ground about Gouvea, to make sure that Reynier should not even now take

<sup>1</sup> I have seen the actual maps used by Massena, and can vouch for all the defects which Mr. Oman describes in them (iii. 347-348). I have tried to use them in writing this history in all parts of the Peninsula, and have found them nowhere to be trusted.

1810. the paved road ; and the First, Third, and Fourth Divisions fell back along the way towards Ponte da Murcella, while the Light Division remained about Cea to cover the British headquarters. At the same time Wellington ordered Leith and Hill to move at once northward upon Espinhal ; the latter to wait further orders there, and the former, after the head of Hill's column should have reached Espinhal, to halt at Miranda do Corvo. He had already summoned Trant to close in with his militia from Moimenta da Beira upon Massena's right flank.

Sept. 18. On the 18th Spencer with the First Division reached Foz d'Arouce, about nine miles east and south of Coimbra, and sent one brigade into the town to secure it against surprise ; while Pack's Portuguese brigade crossed the Mondego at Foz Dão, eighteen or twenty miles up the river from Coimbra. The British headquarters on this day were at Cortiça, some four miles south-east of Foz Dão. On this day, likewise, Ney's advanced guard entered Vizeu, to find it empty, deserted, and resourceless, while the main body of his infantry halted at Mangualde, and his artillery, hopelessly delayed by the badness of the roads, bivouacked a few miles beyond Fornos. Reynier's foremost troops moved along the left bank of the Mondego as far as San Paio, as though to follow the route taken by Wellington ; but the British Commander was not deceived by this feint, though a part of the Second Corps, owing to the blocking of the road, still remained on the south bank of the Mondego.

Sept. 19. On the 19th Spencer's Division entered Coimbra, and Pack's brigade was sent on to Santa Comba Dão with orders to push its advanced guard well towards Tondella and, if pressed by a superior force, to retire behind the Criz. Headquarters remained at Cortiça, and the whole of the British cavalry was brought forward about Moita, with the exception of a few German hussars, who remained around Cea to watch the movements of the French, and of Somers-Cocks, who,

following for some distance upon the enemy's track, 1810. ascertained that Massena had abandoned his communica- Sept. 19. tions and was carrying with him everything, even to his sick men. On this same day, Hill passed the Zezere; and Leith, arriving at Espinhal, received commands to move on to Foz d'Arouce. Trant also was summoned to cross the Vouga at Pedro do Sul, and hasten southward to Agueda and Sardão, so as to cover the road which leads over the Serra de Caramullo to Oporto, and to protect the left flank of the army. This last order was due to an excursion of the French to westward, rendering it uncertain whether they might not follow that direction as far as Agueda, and then turn south over the plain upon Coimbra. At the same time instructions were issued that on the following day Spencer should lead the First Division, a British brigade,<sup>1</sup> and two Portuguese brigades of infantry due north to Mealhada; that Craufurd should move the Light Division over the river to Mortagoa to support Pack; and that the Fourth Division should march to Penacova on the western bank of the Mondego. The cavalry division, together with Picton's, was left about Ponte da Murcella to maintain communications with Leith and Hill. Thus Wellington was in a position to bar the way to the French by whatever route they might advance. If they took the southern road, he could form his line on the ridge of Bussaco, which lies only four miles east of Mealhada; if they took the western road, it may be presumed that he had chosen an advantageous site for battle on the ridge of the Serra de Caramullo.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, on the 19th, Junot's infantry had joined

<sup>1</sup> 1/7th, 1/79th, which had lately arrived at Lisbon.

<sup>2</sup> Napier and Mr. Oman both treat the forces of Trant and Spencer as designed to observe the great road from Oporto to Coimbra. This would imply that they were facing north. But Trant was told that at Agueda, the most northerly point occupied by any part of Wellington's army, he would form the left flank; therefore the front, both of Trant and Spencer, must have been towards the east, observing the road that leads from the east into the great road from Oporto aforesaid.

1810. Ney's at Vizeu; but his cannon had not come up, and the reserve artillery and transport of the army at large
- Sept. 20. had lagged far behind. On the 20th Junot's guns, after enormous exertion, reached Vizeu, the gunners having been obliged practically to reconstruct the roadway; and on the same day Trant, coming down from Moimenta da Beira with a brigade of militia and two squadrons of Portuguese cavalry, attacked the column of reserve-artillery when drawn out along three miles of narrow and precipitous road. He succeeded in destroying some carriages and in capturing a few prisoners, and with better troops could hardly have failed to destroy the entire convoy. His raw levies, however, would not stand against the regular soldiers of the escort, though the latter were but one to four against them; and Massena thus escaped a disaster which must almost certainly have forced him to renounce his campaign. The convoy, however, dared not proceed further until the next day, nor could the Marshal resume his advance in force until it should come up. How-
- Sept. 21. ever, on the 21st Ney's vanguard, which on the 20th had already been moved southward from Vizeu as far as Tondella, continued its march in the same direction upon Santa Comba Dão, while the whole of the Sixth and Second Corps followed in the rear. On
- Sept. 22. the 22nd the Second Corps took the lead of the Sixth, and in the afternoon the advanced guard crossed the Criz, driving back the British outposts, which withdrew to Mortagoa; but Ney's corps remained halted on the road, and Reynier's motionless at Vizeu. The French train of artillery and supplies was still far in rear, and in need of rest and repair; while the aspect of the country, stripped carefully to nakedness, showed Massena that he could count upon no provisions except those which he carried with him.

On the 20th Leith's brigade came up to Foz d'Arouce; while Hill on the same evening reached Espinhal, and found there the Portuguese division of Colonel Le Cor, who had hastened thither from Fundão.

Wellington therefore on that day gave the following orders for the morrow. The Fourth Division was to move up from Penacova to the convent of Bussaco; Picton's was to cross the Mondego at Penacova and take its place; Leith's was to march from Foz d'Arouce and take the place of Picton's at Ponte da Murcella; and the cavalry was to pass the river and occupy the villages between Mortagoa and Bussaco. On the 21st, therefore, the entire army, Hill's division excepted, was within a few hours' march of the ridge of Bussaco; and Wellington on that day transferred his headquarters to the convent upon that ridge. "We have a most excellent position here," he wrote, "where I am strongly tempted to give battle. Unfortunately, Hill is one day later than I expected, and there is a road upon our left by which we may be turned and cut off from Coimbra. But I do not yet give up hopes of discovering a remedy for this last misfortune; and, as for the other, the enemy will afford it to us if they do not cross the Criz to-morrow." The enemy did not cross the Criz on the morrow; wherefore Hill was enabled to reach the Alva in plenty of time, and Wellington to send a message to Trant, bidding him once again to take post at Sardão and so to block the road which, leading upon that point from Mortagoa by Avelleira and Boialvo, turns the position of Bussaco by the north. On the 23rd, the situation remained unchanged, the British advanced guard lying still before Mortagoa, Hill opposite Penacova, Spencer at Mealhada, Leith's, Picton's, and Cole's divisions on the Serra do Bussaco.<sup>1</sup> In the afternoon, however, Reynier's

<sup>1</sup> That the three divisions were all on the Serra do Bussaco by the evening of the 22nd is shown by Wellington to Hill, 22nd Sept. 1810. It is evident from the orders of the Q.M.G. of the same date (*Desp.* iv. 296) that Hill was opposite Penacova on the 23rd. I give these details because Mr. Oman (iii. 356) says on the authority of Leith-Hay that Leith's division crossed the Mondego on the 23rd, whereas Wellington, whom Mr. Oman also quotes, says that Leith's division was on the Serra on the evening of the 22nd (to Hill, 22nd Sept., 8.30 P.M.).



1810. corps drove in the British picquets, and Wellington ordered the Light Division to retire, covering the movement with three regiments of light cavalry. But the French advanced no further than to the heights above Mortagoa ; and in the evening Wellington withdrew the whole of the cavalry, three squadrons excepted, to the Serra, leaving the Light Division strongly posted near the foot of the hill.

Sept. 25. On the 25th Craufurd led the Light Division down into the plain, where it found itself presently in face of the whole of Reynier's corps. Panting, as usual, to distinguish himself, he kept his troops far too long on the lower ground ; and all Wellington's skill was needed to bring off the infantry without a serious engagement.<sup>1</sup> The action of the rear-guard was prolonged until five o'clock, when the French were finally checked before the village of Sula, on the lower slopes of the Serra do Bussaco, and at six o'clock the firing ceased. The Light Division then ascended the heights, and Loison's division, which formed the French vanguard, bivouacked at their base. On that evening Wellington summoned Spencer and his troops from Mealhada and Hill's division from the south of the Mondego, ordering the latter to leave Fane's Portuguese horse and Le Cor's infantry in position at Ponte da Murcella. Both divisions were in

Sept. 26. their places by nine o'clock on the morning of the 26th.

The Serra do Bussaco consists of a single uninterrupted ridge covered with heather and gorse, which rises abruptly from the broken country around, and overtops the whole of it by from three to five hundred feet, presenting from the summit one of the most glorious views to be found in Portugal. From the Mondego, which forms its southern boundary, this ridge has a total length of about nine miles, and runs in a general direction nearly due south and north.

<sup>1</sup> Napier, iii. 324. Mr. Oman throws doubt on Napier's statement that Craufurd imperilled his division on this occasion ; but Napier is confirmed by Kincaid (*Random Shots*, p. 83), and Leach confesses that the rear-guard was very hard pressed.

Its highest point is nearly eighteen hundred feet<sup>1</sup> above 1810. the level of the sea, and lies near the Mondego, from Sept. 26. which summit it tends gradually to fall on its progress northward; but it does so in long waves, which flow up to a succession of peaks, each crowned by masses of grey boulders. The sides of the hill are seamed with ravines, most of which carry a tiny tributary to the stream below; but the water gushes from the rock, not from bogs at the summit, and this peculiarity distinguishes the ridge from one to which it bears, in character, a singular resemblance, namely, Dunkery Hill on Exmoor.<sup>2</sup> For not only is the top of the hill sound, firm ground, but the ravines, or combes, to use the good old English word, are shallower, less steep, and less narrow than their counterparts in Somerset. They are, however, strewn with great stones, through which troops could indeed pass, but very slowly, so that for practical purposes they cut up the hill into vertical sections. Near the northern extremity of the hill, and upon the reverse or western slope, stood the convent of Bussaco, now in ruins, surrounded by a wood and enclosed by a wall, making convenient headquarters for Wellington. The surface of the summit, outside this enclosure and for some distance to southward, is broad, flat, and fairly well fitted for cavalry, though always encumbered with stones among the heather; and the same characteristic is to be observed towards the centre of the position, though the southern half of the ridge has a saddle-back. Speaking generally, the chasm which parts the Serra from the lower hills on the east is, as Napier says, so profound that from the top the naked eye can hardly distinguish the movement of troops at the bottom.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman says 1200 feet, but the ordnance map marks the highest point at 547 metres.

<sup>2</sup> I speak of the eastern front of Bussaco and the northern front of Dunkery, but the ridge of Bussaco is fully twice as long as Dunkery.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Oman (iii. 363 n.) takes exception to this statement of Napier, applying it to the combe which seams the side of the hill between Moura and Sula, instead of to the main valley, as I think that Napier intended.

1810. Three principal roads cross the Serra do Bussaco ;  
 Sept. 26. the first running from San Paulo to Palmases about three miles north of the Mondego ; the second still further to north, leading from San Antonio de Cantara to Palheiros ; and the third, which is the paved road from Mortagoa to Coimbra, towards the northern extremity near the convent. Besides these there were two bad tracks, which traversed the lower shoulders of the extreme south of the hill. It was tolerably certain that an enemy which contemplated an assault of the position would, if only to avoid blunders of direction, advance near one or more of these roads ; and Wellington had drawn up his line accordingly. Having somewhat fewer than fifty thousand infantry,<sup>1</sup> he could not, of course, hold a front

<sup>1</sup> *First Division.* Spencer.

Stopford's Brigade.	1/Coldstream, 1/3rd Guards,	
1 co. 5/60th	.	1684
Blantyre's Brigade.	2/24th, 2/42nd, 1/61st, 1 co.	
5/60th	.	1516
Löwe's Brigade.	1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th Line batts.,	
detachment L.I., K.G.L.	.	2061
Pakenham's Brigade.	1/7th, 1/79th	1792
Total	.	<u>7053</u>

*Second Division.* Hill.

W. Stewart's Brigade (Colborne in command).	1/3rd,	
2/31st, 2/48th, 2/66th, 1 co. 5/60th	.	2247
Inglis's Brigade.	29th, 1/48th, 1/57th, 1 co.	
5/60th	.	1818
Wilson's Brigade.	2/28th, 2/34th, 2/39th, 1 co.	
5/60th	.	1672
Total	.	<u>5737</u>

*Hamilton's Portuguese Division* (attached to Hill's).

Archibald Campbell's Brigade.	4th, 10th Line	
(each 2 batts.)	.	2250
Fonseca's Brigade.	2nd and 14th Line (each 2	
batts.)	.	2690
Total	.	<u>4940</u>

of nine miles effectively at every point ; but neither <sup>1810.</sup> could the enemy attack it at every point. He had <sup>Sept. 26.</sup> caused a road to be constructed from end to end of the ridge along the western, or reverse, side ; and he trusted, therefore, to be able to reinforce any threatened quarter not only with ease, but unseen by the enemy. On his right, therefore, he stationed Hill's division of ten British battalions ; with five companies of the Lusitanian Legion at Nossa Senhora do Monte, far forward on the lower slopes to Hill's right front, and two Portuguese brigades on his right. Then came the right wing of Leith's brigade, three British and two Por-

*Third Division.* Picton.

Mackinnon's Brigade.	1/45th, 1/74th, 1/88th	1808
Lightburne's Brigade.	2/5th, 2/83rd, 3 cos. 5/60th	1160
de Champalimaud's Portuguese Brigade.	9th Line	
(2 batts.), 21st Line (1 batt.)		1775
Total		<u>4743</u>

*Fourth Division.* Cole.

Alex. Campbell's Brigade.	2/7th, 1/11th, 2/53rd,	
1 co. 5/60th		2109
Kemmis's Brigade.	3/27th, 1/40th, old 97th, 1 co.	
5/60th		2448
Collins's Portuguese Brigade.	11th and 23rd Line	
(each 2 batts.)		2843
Total		<u>7400</u>

*Fifth Division.* Leith.

Barnes's Brigade.	3/1st, 1/9th, 2/38th	1879
Spry's Portuguese.	3rd and 15th Line (each 2 batts.), Thomar Militia, 1 batt.	2619
Eben's Portuguese.	3 batts. Lusitanian Legion	1646
Douglas's Portuguese.	8th Line (2 batts.)	1161
Total		<u>7305</u>

*Light Division.* Craufurd.

Beckwith's Brigade.	1/43rd, 4 cos. 1/95th, 3rd	
Port. Caçadores		1896
Barclay's Brigade.	1/52nd, 4 cos. 1/95th, 1st Port.	
Caçadores		1891
Total		<u>3787</u>

1810. tuguese battalions, astride of the San Paulo road ; next, Sept. 26. a gap of two miles, and then Leith's five remaining Portuguese battalions. On the left of these, at the head of the Palheiros road, stood Picton's division ; and on the left of Picton the three brigades of Spencer's division, the Guards on the right, Cameron's brigade in the centre, and Pakenham's on the left. To the left of these again, Pack's Portuguese covered the southern angle and eastern front of the convent's enclosure ; and on Pack's left the Light Division took up the line, which was prolonged by Campbell's brigade of Portuguese, and finally ended by Cole's division, which occupied two parallel ridges on the extreme north of the Serra. Coleman's Portuguese and the King's German Legion were drawn up in rear of Craufurd, the former in column on the

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*Independent Portuguese Brigades.*

Pack.	1st and 16th Line (each 2 batts.), 4th batt.	
Caçadores . . . . .		2769
H. Campbell.	6th and 18th Line (each 2 batts.),	
6th batt. Caçadores . . . . .		3249
Coleman.	7th and 19th Line (each 2 batts.), 2nd	
batt. Caçadores . . . . .		2345
Cavalry.	2 squadrons 4th Dragoons . . . . .	210
<i>Artillery.</i>		
British.	Horse, 332 ; Field, 700 . . . . .	1032
K.G.L.	Field . . . . .	318
Portuguese . . . . .		(say) 600

*Total.*

Infantry.	British, 24,777 ; Portuguese, 24,549	49,326
Cavalry.	„ 210 ; „ nil.	210
Artillery.	„ 1350 ; „ 600	1,950
Total of all ranks . . . . .		<u>51,486</u>

*British Cavalry (near Mealhada).*

De Grey's Brigade.	3rd D.G., 2 sq. 4th D. . . . .	620
Slade's Brigade.	1st D., 14th L.D. . . . .	967
Anson's Brigade.	16th L.D., 1st Hussars K.G.L. . . . .	902

Total . . . . . 2489

*Troops left on the Alva.*

Cavalry.	Fane's Brigade. 13th L.D., 430, 4 Portuguese regiments, 1450 . . . . .	1880
Infantry.	Lecor's Portuguese Division . . . . .	4811

right, the latter in line on the left. The enclosure of 1810. the convent had been fully prepared for defence. Of the cavalry, two squadrons of the Fourth Dragoons only were stationed behind the Guards on the summit of the hill. The remainder were kept on the lower ground in rear of the position, about Mealhada, from whence they sent patrols out to the northern flank of the ridge, and in particular to the road from Mortagoa to Sardão,<sup>1</sup> though with every precaution to avoid calling the enemy's attention to the existence of this route.

On the evening of the 25th Ney's corps came up to Sept. 25. the station occupied by Reynier's corps before the Serra, and the latter took ground farther to the south about San Antonio de Cantaro. On the following morning Sept. 26. Ney reconnoitred Wellington's position; and at half-past ten he wrote to Reynier that the British were moving the bulk of their force to the north, towards the Oporto road; though the ground to the right, that is to say, to the north,<sup>2</sup> of the convent seemed to be held in some strength and showed twelve guns. He added that, if he were in command, he should attack at once, and that in any case Reynier could not go wrong in driving in the British outposts and preparing to turn the British right. This letter betrays not only an utter misconception of the situation, but contentment with very imperfect reconnaissance. The highest point from which Ney could have surveyed the Serra was from two to four hundred feet below its summit; hence it was impossible for him to see if the position were occupied, unless the troops had been brought forward beyond the crest, which was the last mistake that Wellington was likely to make.<sup>3</sup> The battalions which the Marshal saw marching

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of Viscount Combermere, i. 158.

<sup>2</sup> So at least I understand it; and the guns which he saw were, I take it, those of Ross's battery with Craufurd, and of the K.G.L.'s battery before the enclosure.

<sup>3</sup> "When upon the Serra, the troops are to be kept a little behind the ridge, so that they may not be seen by the enemy until it becomes necessary to move them up on the ridge to repel an attack." Q.M.G. to Hill, 25th Sept. 1810.

1810. northward can only have been Cole's division, shifting to  
Sept. 26. their left in order to make room for Spencer ; and, all troops to the south of the convent being invisible to him, he drew the hasty conclusion that the British were retreating upon Mealhada, and that a direct attack by his own corps, combined with a turning movement by Reynier's, would suffice to clear the Serra. French officers at the foot of the heights were by no means so confident. It seemed to them that it was no light matter to order their infantry even to climb the ascent, without fighting an enemy at the top.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Massena was not at the front, and Junot's corps was still far in the rear, so that Ney could only send his report to his chief at Mortagoa. At two o'clock in the afternoon Massena appeared, and reconnoitred the Serra as closely as circumstances permitted. Accounts vary greatly as to the opinions of his generals concerning the course that should be pursued. Some say that Junot, Reynier, and Ney were unanimous for an immediate attack ; others that they were unanimous against it ; others again that Junot and Reynier were for it and Ney against it.<sup>2</sup> It seems most probable that the first of these three accounts is the true one ; but that the regimental officers were of one mind in the contrary view. Finally Massena issued his orders for the morrow. Reynier's corps, nearly fifteen thousand infantry, was to assail the British right in one or two columns, covered by skirmishers, at such points as seemed to him most accessible ; and, having gained the summit, to form close column and turn north to the convent at Bussaco. The Sixth Corps, nearly twenty-two thousand infantry, was to attack by the two roads that led to Coimbra, that is to say, by the paved road and by a rough track that runs parallel to it on the north side, through the village of Sula ; but it was not to move until Reynier was seen to be master

<sup>1</sup> Guingret, *Relation . . . de la Campagne de Portugal*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> See authorities in Oman, iii. 368-369 ; and compare *Aperçu Nouveau sur les Campagnes des Français en Portugal* with Guingret.

of the heights, unless to foil any menace of the British against the Second Corps. Lastly, the Eighth Corps, about sixteen thousand infantry, was to remain in reserve at Moura, with its artillery disposed so as to check any forward movement of the British. The entire force of the French infantry thus numbered something over fifty thousand of all ranks, and there was little hope of effective help for them from their artillery, since the summit of the Serra was for the most part out of range from any possible position of the French guns. From the tenor of these directions it is plain that Massena had no inkling of the presence of Hill's corps, nor, probably, even of Leith's. However, having made these very crude arrangements, he returned to Mortagoa for the night.

The dawn of the 27th broke misty on the Serra do Bussaco, when Reynier began to array his soldiers for action. The point of attack selected by him was the leading spur traversed by the road to Palheiros, which crosses the ridge in a depression between two of the tallest peaks ; but, sharing Massena's idea that there were no British troops to the south of Picton, he arranged his advance accordingly. Merle's division of eleven battalions, each about six hundred strong, took the right and began the ascent to north of the road ; Heudelet's division of fifteen battalions took the left, following the line of the road itself ; and to south of them there was nothing.<sup>1</sup> Each regiment, whether consisting of three or four battalions, was formed into a single column of companies, which would give a front of about fifty men to a regiment ; and the whole appear to have moved off in echelon from their right.

<sup>1</sup> *Merle's Division :*

Brigade Sarrut.	2nd Light, 36th Line	} Total, 11 battalions.
Brigade Graindorge.	4th Light	

*Heudelet's Division :*

Brigade Foy.	17th Light, 70th Line	} Total, 15 battalions.
Brigade Arnaud.	31st Light, 47th Line	



1810. covered by a cloud of light troops. The 36th of the Sept. 27. Line led Merle's division, followed in succession by the 2nd and 4th Light; while of Heudelet's division the 31st Light took the lead, always in rear of Merle's troops, along the line of the road itself, with Foy's brigade in support, and the 47th of the Line held in reserve.

It was apparently at about half-past five that Merle's division, having been massed about a mile to the north of the road from San Antonio, threw out its skirmishers and began to toil up the acclivity of the Serra. Neither man nor horse will climb straight up a steep hill if they can ascend it slanting; and, since the upper slopes of the hill were shrouded in mist, the heads of the columns, except the 31st Regiment, which was guided by the road, seem to have inclined with one accord to the north, that is to say, to the French right. The rear of the columns, perceiving the tendency, conformed to it; and the bulk of the force streamed slowly in diagonal lines towards the high and commanding ground occupied by the right of Spencer's division. Wellington, having observed on the previous evening the movement of French troops up the valley opposite to this point, had summoned Lightburne's brigade to close up to the right of Spencer's division, and had ordered Leith to detach Spry's brigade and the 8th Regiment of Portuguese to reinforce Picton; from which it would appear that, contrary to the generally accepted notion, he was prepared to let the enemy gain the summit of the hill in his centre.<sup>1</sup> Nor is this surprising, for the French were bound to reach the top breathless and in disorder; they would have no guns with them; they would take some time to deploy to their front, in which case Spencer could fall upon their flank; and still longer to change front to the right, in order to attack Spencer, in which case Hill would not be slow to come up in their rear. Picton, however, feeling nervous about the gap between his own division and Lightburne's

<sup>1</sup> Wrottesley's *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 112.

brigade, sent off the Eighty-eighth under Colonel Wallace on the same evening to the head of a combe about a mile to his left, by which the French might ascend the height unperceived. 1810.  
Sept. 27.

Before a shot had been fired on the morning of the 27th, Mackinnon, after visiting Wallace's post, reported that the enemy was assembling over against it; whereupon Picton reinforced the Eighty-eighth with four companies of the Forty-fifth under Major Gwynne. Then the battle began, as Merle's skirmishers came up and opened fire upon Lightburne's brigade. Lightburne's light companies<sup>1</sup> swarmed out to meet them; and presently Wellington galloped up, and having ordered the battalion-companies of the Fifth, whose men were beginning to fall, to retire beyond the crest, directed two of Thompson's guns, under Captain Lane, to unlimber on a knoll below and play with grape upon the French. Upon this Merle's column swerved to its left, though some of his skirmishers stood for some time in front of Lightburne until finally repulsed; and the British sharp-shooters, who had been strengthened by Wallace, moved along the side of the hill parallel with them, until they passed out of sight both of Lightburne and of the Eighty-eighth. Wellington then rode away, and Lightburne's brigade stood with ordered arms, awaiting what might come.

Meanwhile Reynier's fourteen guns, posted upon such points of vantage as he could find, opened a heavy but ineffective fire upon Picton's main position at the pass of San Antonio; and presently the French 31st came up by the road along the easiest slope on the whole of the Serra. The single Portuguese battery at the head of the pass had been reinforced by a second early in the morning; and their twelve guns ploughed bloody furrows through the serried columns; but still the gallant Frenchmen pressed on, driving the British skirmishers aside till they were stopped by the fire of the British Seventy-fourth, and of two Portuguese

<sup>1</sup> Those of the Eighty-third and Fifth only, so far as I can gather.

1810. regiments aligned upon either flank of it. The light  
Sept. 27. companies of Picton's division, owing to the inclusion  
of three odd companies of the Sixtieth, made up so  
numerous a body that they had been combined into  
a light corps, under Lieutenant-colonel Williams ;  
and that officer, with excellent judgment, ranged his  
men along the left flank of the 31st, while three  
companies of the Seventy-fourth came forward to  
straiten it on the right flank. The unfortunate regi-  
ment was brought to a standstill. In vain it strove to  
deploy ; it was always scourged back into a formless  
mass by the rain of grape and musketry in front  
and flanks. Very soon Picton was satisfied that  
nothing was to be feared in this quarter, and hastened  
off to his left to see how things fared with Wallace ;  
giving orders for the remaining companies of the Forty-  
fifth and a battalion of the 8th Portuguese to follow  
him.

Wallace, for his part, had stationed the four companies  
of the Forty-fifth at some distance to his right, evidently  
in order that they might watch the head of another  
cleft in the hillside ; but on seeing the French masses  
swerve away in that direction he sent his Major, Dunne,  
to follow its progress and report to him. Dunne  
returned instantly with the news that the French  
sharp-shooters had ensconced themselves in a ledge of  
rocks near the crest, beyond which the main body was  
advancing full upon the four companies of the Forty-  
fifth. Wallace without hesitation formed his battalion  
into column, and moved rapidly to the support of  
Gwynne. As he drew near the rocks, his force was  
raked from end to end by the fire of the French,  
who were hidden there ; but calmly drawing out three  
companies to sweep the enemy from their shelter, he  
led the remaining six to the help of the Forty-fifth.  
Gwynne's men had already opened fire upon the principal  
French column with no appreciable effect, when Wallace  
came up on their right, and after a volley at close range  
gave the word to charge. The odds were heavy, but the

French were breathless and disordered, as well they might be after so arduous a climb over ground so rough ;<sup>1810.</sup> and it should seem that their regiments had become mingled together,<sup>1</sup> so that it was not easy for them to correct their formation. In any case, such was the impetuosity of the onslaught upon their flank that they recoiled and became crowded together, while the British bayonets played fearful havoc among them. Wellington, who was watching near at hand, brought up a couple of guns<sup>2</sup> to ply the flank and rear of the column with grape. The 36th then gave way, and surging back laterally upon the 2nd, carried them in turn back upon the 4th. Douglas's battalion of the 8th Portuguese, which, with a hesitation pardonable in young troops, had at first shrunk from closing with numbers so superior, struck in at once when the French began to waver, and presently the whole of Merle's division turned and ran down the slope with British, Irish, and Portuguese hard at their heels. Nor did the pursuers abandon the slaughter until the fire of Reynier's guns compelled them to regain their own position.

This struggle was still in progress when Picton, riding towards the sound of the firing, came upon the light companies of the Seventy-fourth and Eighty-eighth, which had apparently been separated from Williams and were falling back in disorder before a column of French ; while a shower of bullets coming from above showed

<sup>1</sup> Grattan of the Connaught Rangers mentions that the French who fell opposite Lightburne's brigade were of the 2nd Light, that some who were killed on the rocks were of the 4th Light, and Irish brigade, and that the main attack of the Eighty-eighth fell on the 36th.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chambers (*Bussaco*, p. 87) thinks that the two guns mentioned by Napier were those of Captain Lane, already referred to. But if it be a fact (as undoubtedly it seems to be) that these two guns caused Merle's columns to swerve away to southward out of range, it is not clear how, unless they were moved, they could have contributed to their defeat at another point. On the other hand, it is quite intelligible that Wellington should have called up two more of Thompson's guns from their place with Lightburne's brigade. Still, Mr. Chambers may be right.

1810. him that the French sharp-shooters were in actual  
Sept. 27. occupation of one of the rocky peaks on the very summit of the hill. Rallying the light companies, he placed them under the command of Major Smith of the Forty-fifth, who speedily drove the French from the peak, though he fell in the onset; and Birmingham's battalion of the 8th Portuguese, coming up at the critical moment, checked the French column by an attack on its flank. This body can have been of no great strength, and was probably only some fraction of Merle's force which, having no enemy immediately on its front, had outstripped the rest in gaining the crest of the hill.<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese seem only to have brought them to a standstill; and it was the onslaught of the Eighty-eighth, dashing the whole of the main attack aside from flank to flank, which accomplished the final defeat of this as of every part of Merle's division.<sup>2</sup>

As the fugitives of the beaten battalions came pouring down the hill, General Foy had begun the ascent to support with his brigade the attack of the 31st. Dreading the influence of the example upon his men, he halted them for a few minutes, when Reynier came up to him raging. "Why don't you go on?" he shouted. "You can get your men on if you choose, instead of doing nothing." Furious with indignation,

<sup>1</sup> Such is the construction which I place on Picton's account of his own proceedings in two letters to Wellington and to a friend (Robinson's *Memoirs of Picton*, i. 317-324, 331-338), read in conjunction with Burgoyne's account (Wrottesley's *Life of Burgoyne*, i. 112-113). Mr. Oman conjectures that Picton merely took part in the general repulse of the main column by Wallace, striking in rather late; and he may be right. But the impression given to me by the various accounts is that which I have written down; and I find, after writing it, that it is confirmed by the observations of Mr. Chambers.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Chambers in his book, *Bussaco*, conjectures, not unreasonably, that this column was Graindorge's brigade, *i.e.* the 4th of the Line; but I have already given my reasons for assuming that Merle's division was all mixed together, and I do not think that any very powerful column could have been so easily turned back by raw troops.

Foy galloped to the head of his right-hand regiment, the 17th, and led it up the hill, bidding the 70th follow it in echelon on the left. The direction which he took seems to have been upon the pass of St. Antonio, in fulfilment of his orders to support the 31st,<sup>1</sup> but whether from accident or design, both of his columns inclined, like their predecessors, to northward. He therefore came under the full fire of the guns at the head of the aforesaid pass. At this juncture, however, General Leith came upon the scene, having received a message from Wellington bidding him move to his left and support Picton, if his own front were not threatened. His movements had further been quickened by a panic-stricken message from a staff-officer, to the effect that the French had severed the British line. The comb of the hill being too rough for rapid advance of his troops, he formed them into column of route and brought them on by the road which had been cut on the reverse side of the Serra, and, of course, out of sight of the enemy. Riding forward to look into matters for himself, he came upon Arentschild's Portuguese battery, on the south side of the San Antonio road, which had exhausted its ammunition. Spry's brigade together with Douglas's battalion of the 8th Portuguese, which last had rallied after the pursuit of Merle's division, were drawn up in a second line near these guns, the first line consisting as before of the Seventy-fourth flanked by Champalimaud's 21st and 9th Portuguese, so that the pass was safe enough. But Foy could be seen gaining

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman says that he directed his column to "the first and lowest hill-top to the French right (north) of the San Antonio pass." He certainly brought it ultimately to that point, but Leith's account (*Wellington Suppl. Desp.* vi. 637) says that part of his column at one time turned to its left, and only swerved to the right when the rest of the column had succeeded in reaching the plateau. Moreover, the Adjutant of the Seventy-fourth (Cannon's *Hist. of the 74th*) states that one column threatened to force the position by the road at this time, and that, owing to the removal of the Portuguese regiment from its left flank, the situation of the Seventy-fourth seemed at one moment desperate.

1810. ground farther to the north ; wherefore Leith ordered  
Sept. 27. his own battery of six-pounders to take the place of  
Arentschild's, leaving the Lusitanian Legion massed on  
the reverse slope to protect Arentschild's guns, and  
directed the 9th Portuguese regiment from the first  
line and Douglas's battalion of the 8th from the  
second line to take ground to their left towards the  
threatened point. This done, he galloped off to his  
British brigade, which he had halted on the other side  
of the hill by the San Antonio road.

Meanwhile Foy pursued his way under a fire which,  
signally brave man though he was, he described as  
terrible, for the sharp-shooters of the Allies harried his  
column incessantly, and the French could make no  
reply. He could see that his task was hopeless, and  
that over ground so difficult it was impossible to  
maintain his troops in any formation, or to keep them  
under any control. Still his valiant men pressed on to  
the crest of the hill, encountered the two battalions of  
the 9th Portuguese and Birmingham's battalion of the  
8th, which seems to have resumed its former place,  
drove back all three of them in disorder, and advanced  
diagonally over the plateau towards the summit. The  
leading soldiers gained a rocky peak in rear of Picton's  
station, and stood there cheering and waving their caps,  
while their comrades swarmed up, with such speed as  
their exhaustion would permit, to second them.

There is no more dangerous moment for troops than  
when they think that they have carried a position, and  
that their work is done. At this instant Leith came up  
with Barnes's brigade, and led the foremost regiment,  
the Ninth, obliquely against the rocky knoll, with the  
Thirty-eighth following in support. It should seem  
that Douglas's battalion of the 8th Portuguese and  
Meade's five companies of the Forty-fifth came up at  
the same time and opened fire upon the left flank of the  
French column farther down the hill.<sup>1</sup> But be that as

<sup>1</sup> This is Picton's account, which is borne out by Douglas's.  
Leith and Gomm both claim that the Ninth Foot did the whole

it may, the Ninth attacked the knoll in line with the 1810. bayonet,<sup>1</sup> and the French, apparently stupefied by the Sept. 27. counter-assault, gave way instantly. They were still in heavy masses, Foy having tried in vain to deploy them ; and not all his efforts could prevent the leading troops from shrinking towards their right away from the attack. The Ninth poured in a volley, one bullet of which wounded Foy in the arm ; and the entire French brigade took to its heels, carrying their Brigadier away with them in their flight, while the Ninth and Thirty-eighth dashed after them and hunted them headlong to the bottom of the hill. Never, to all superficial appearance, was there a stranger rout of good French troops. Foy's seven battalions went into action between four and five thousand strong ; their total losses in the action did not exceed six hundred and seventy, of which it is fair to assume that fully one-half were incurred during the pursuit ; and yet, after driving the Portuguese with ease before them, they gave way before the onslaught of a single British battalion. Nevertheless, their Brigadier presaged the disaster from the moment when Reynier hurried him into action before his troops were properly formed. The men followed him with all possible bravery ; but they followed him as a flock of sheep, not as a body of disciplined soldiers, and as a flock of sheep they were driven away. From the fact that the Ninth and Thirty-eighth suffered fewer than fifty casualties between them, it is evident that they met only with the feeblest of resistance.<sup>2</sup>

The repulse of Foy's brigade following on the defeat of Merle's division exhausted the powers of

of the work alone ; but with all respect to the Ninth, I fear that they were prejudiced.

<sup>1</sup> Leith says expressly *without firing a shot*. Leith Hay says that they fired a volley at 100 yards.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Oman is undoubtedly right in holding, in contradiction to Napier, that the attack repulsed by Wallace with the Eighty-eighth and that repelled by Leith with the Ninth were totally distinct, and separated probably by at least an hour. But the various accounts are difficult to reconcile in point of time.



1810. Reynier. He had still one brigade in hand, but the  
Sept. 27. remaining three had been so roughly handled, having lost over two thousand killed, wounded, and prisoners, that he could not hope to bring them up again to the attack. Even if he had attempted it, he would have found the whole of Hill's division to oppose him. These troops had been hastily summoned from the right upon the alarm that Foy had broken the British line; and for some distance the whole of the eleven thousand men had moved in one column at the double. The battle, therefore, in this quarter came to an end.

On the British left Ney threw his corps into action, as he had been ordered, when he thought that he saw Merle's division reach the crest of the hill. It is probable, however, that he mistook one of the lower slopes for the summit and advanced his corps prematurely. The ground before him was more difficult than that before Reynier, and Craufurd had taken masterly advantage of it. Over against the convent of Bussaco the ground sinks at first gently, then drops abruptly in a steep descent to a kind of little plateau, which stands out from the hill like a bracket from a wall; and on this bracket Craufurd had posted the Forty-third on the right, the Fifty-second on the left, and the 1st Caçadores in reserve, bidding them lie down so that they might be concealed from view. From this plateau the hill again falls sharply to a second of the same kind, whereon stands the village of Sula, a typical tiny Portuguese hamlet of red roofs and white walls, which still bear marks of the fight. Through the middle of the position runs a shallow combe filled with great boulders, ideal shelter for sharp-shooters; and on its right lies the deepest and most impracticable ravine on the hillside. The high road passes on the right, or south, of this last combe, curving round its head in a huge bend before finally striking to the west past the convent. The ascent followed by the road, being a leading spur, is easier than that just

described, which lies immediately to north of it ; and at 1810. one point, considerably lower than Sula, it is covered by Sept. 27. the hamlet of Moura. To sweep this access Wellington had stationed two if not three batteries at the head of the deep ravine, while Ross's battery of Craufurd's division, ensconced in a natural shelter near his infantry, was likewise within easy range of the road. But the ravine itself was an obstacle which effectually isolated the infantry on its north from that on its south side, so that Ney's onset resolved itself practically into two distinct assaults, which will demand separate description.

The French troops that were first to move were Loison's division, which was destined for the attack upon Craufurd's position. It consisted of two brigades,<sup>1</sup> each of two battalions, General Simon's, led by the 26th regiment on the right, and General Ferey's, led by the 66th, on the left. Each of these brigades was formed apparently into a single deep column,<sup>2</sup> probably of double companies, covered as usual by a swarm of skirmishers. On beginning the ascent, however, through a belt of pines, they found themselves from the first stiffly resisted ; for Craufurd had thrown into the skirmishing line the whole of the Ninety-fifth and 3rd Caçadores, who contested every step. With great difficulty the allied sharp-shooters were thrust back and driven from the village of Sula, which was occupied by the French. The enemy, however, now came under the fire of Ross's battery, which, served with great swiftness and admirable accuracy, plied them with shrapnel-shell. Craufurd then reinforced his skirmishing line with the 1st Caçadores, and the combat was renewed on the steep slope above the village. Still the French pressed on undauntedly. The British sharp-shooters came running in over the lip of the ascent to the main body ; Ross drew back his guns ; and the head of the

<sup>1</sup> *Simon's Brigade* : 26th Line, 3 batts. ; Legion du Midi ; Leg. Hanovrienne, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ferey's Brigade* : 2/32nd Léger, 1 batt. ; 66th Line, 3 ; Eighty-second Line, 2.

1810. French column could be heard, though still unseen, Sept. 27. not many yards away. Then Craufurd, who was watching solitary on the top of a boulder, in a shrill voice gave the word to his British battalions to charge; and nearly eighteen hundred bayonets plunged with a mighty shout over the edge of the slope. Four companies only, the two on the extreme left of the Forty-third and on the extreme right of the Fifty-second, found any but skirmishers before them, and these four dashed headlong into the mass of the French.<sup>1</sup> The head of the column stood for a moment, and the front ranks fired a volley which knocked down a few of the British; but the nearest companies of the Forty-third and Fifty-second wheeled up upon the flanks of the enemy, and gave them in quick succession three volleys so terrible

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman in his plan and in his text (iii. 380-381) shows each regiment, whatever the number of its battalions, in column of companies; but he says that the 26th and 66th led the way, which is no doubt correct. This rather points to two columns only, which is the number given by Booth in Levinge's *Historical Records of the Forty-third*. Napier speaks of one column only, but he was on the right of the Forty-third in the action, whereas Booth was in the left wing of the Fifty-second. The inference is that the two columns advanced in echelon, with the left, or Ferey's, leading. From Booth's account the front of the two French columns was equal to that of the two right-hand companies of the Fifty-second and the two left-hand companies of the Forty-third. These four companies jointly numbered about 350 men, and in double rank give a frontage of 175 men. The French 26th and 66th each in column of double companies would have presented each a front of about 68 men (200 men in triple rank) with some interval between them, which would make the front almost the same as that of the four British companies— $68 \times 2 + 34$  (*i.e.* the front of one company) = 170 men. Assuming, as I think Mr. Oman rightly does, that the single battalion on the extreme left of the French was the 32nd Light, there would remain, according to him, five columns of regiments in front of the Forty-third and Fifty-second. Their front in column of companies would be  $34 \times 5 = 170$  men; without allowing for intervals. Assuming that there was only one interval—that between the two brigades—and taking the interval as the width of one company, we get  $170 + 34 = 204$ . No certain result can be deduced from these calculations; but I give them to show the base upon which I found my narrative.

that the whole turned and ran; the four British companies plying the bayonet with fearful slaughter in the thick of them, and overthrowing, apparently, even more than they killed or wounded. The remaining companies of both British regiments aligned themselves, as the first had done, along both flanks of the fugitives; but the four pursuing companies were too closely mingled with the enemy to allow their comrades to fire, otherwise the French would have been almost annihilated. Even as things were, the rout of the enemy was complete. One French battalion only, which had strayed into the deep combe, escaped the fate of the main column and came up in front of Coleman's brigade, where it was charged by the 19th Portuguese and driven down to the bottom to rejoin its comrades. Within five minutes of the beginning of Craufurd's counter-attack the Forty-third and Fifty-second were at the foot of the hill. It took them half an hour to climb back to their position, and they returned with a loss of only twenty-four men. Loison's division on the other hand had lost over twelve hundred killed and wounded.<sup>1</sup>

Farther to the south, across the deep combe, Marchand's division came into action rather later than Loison's. Upon emerging from Moura, the leading brigade, that of Maucune, came under a destructive

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman says that the counter-attack opened with a volley of the British at ten paces distance. Craufurd undoubtedly gave the order not to fire but to charge. The two Napiers and Booth (Levinge's *Historical Records of the Forty-third*) all three speak of a charge, followed by subsequent volleys when the leading companies of the two regiments had wheeled upon the flank of the French column. George Napier, who was in one of the pursuing companies, mentions expressly that he formed his men into column, but, naturally in the circumstances, says nothing at all of their firing, though he does speak of volleys of other companies; and, considering the ground, I believe that the counter-attack was opened with the bayonet only. To call men up to the brink of a very steep descent, and order them to fire, would certainly mean that most of the bullets would fly over the heads of the attacking column.

1810. fire, first from the three batteries at the head of the  
Sept. 27. combe, and farther on from a battalion of Caçadores in  
a wood on their left flank. Maucune's men, however,  
cleared the wood and pushed on till they met Pack's  
five Portuguese battalions, whom they engaged bravely  
enough, but with no result. The second brigade, that  
of Marcognet, finding itself under heavy fire of shrapnel-  
shell from Ross's guns as well as from the remaining three  
batteries, halted on the road ; and Ney, seeing that the  
French attack had failed at all points, recalled Marchand's  
division. Massena had still Junot's division and  
Mermet's division of the Sixth Corps, twenty thousand  
fresh men, to throw into the fight ; but besides Hill's  
troops on the right and Cole's on the left, both of  
which had by this time closed in towards the centre,  
Wellington had also Spencer's entire division, which,  
except for some skirmishing of the light companies  
against a feint attack, had not fired a shot. Massena  
therefore gave up the attempt to carry the position,  
and by two o'clock both armies were mingling amicably  
over the stream at the foot of the hill, and ministering  
to the wounded. A small party of French later in  
the day occupied Sula from mere bravado, but was  
quickly turned out by a company of the Forty-third ;  
and these were the last shots fired at the battle of  
Bussaco.

The losses of the French amounted to at least four  
thousand six hundred killed, wounded, and taken ; over  
nine hundred officers and men being killed outright.  
The casualties of the officers alone amounted to over  
three hundred, and among them Generals Merle, Foy,  
Simon, and Maucune were wounded, and General  
Graindorge killed. The loss of the British did not  
exceed six hundred and thirty-one, and, that of the  
Portuguese being nearly the same, the total reached  
twelve hundred and fifty-one. Few officers, even of  
field rank, were hurt ; and the most interesting of those  
who suffered were the three brothers Napier, George  
and William wounded in neighbouring companies of

the Fifty-second and Forty-third, and Charles maimed <sup>1810.</sup> and disfigured for life by a bullet which shattered his <sup>Sept. 27.</sup> jaw when riding on Wellington's staff in rear of the Eighty-eighth, shortly before Wallace's charge. The British regiments which suffered most severely were the Forty-fifth and Eighty-eighth, the first with one hundred and fifty, the second with one hundred and thirty-four casualties, representing in the former case a loss of one man in four, and in the latter of one man in five. Among the Portuguese, in the two battalions of the 8th there fell about one man in eight; and in the single battalion of the 4th, about one man in six. With his usual good sense, Wellington gave the Portuguese their baptism of fire on very advantageous ground, and they acquitted themselves upon the whole with great credit. From that day their value was quadrupled, for they had gained confidence in themselves and in their leaders, and lost faith in the invincibility of the French.

Beyond all question the result of the action was a very unpleasant surprise for Massena, yet it is not extraordinary that he should have attempted the attack. His own army mustered sixty thousand men; he was aware that the British consisted of less than half that number, and that the British and Portuguese jointly did not exceed fifty thousand. Knowing little or nothing of the resuscitation of the Portuguese troops, he left them wholly out of account, assuming not unreasonably in the circumstances that, at best, they were of no finer quality than the Spaniards. Premising, therefore, that the Portuguese would run away at once, he was not unduly sanguine in expecting that with a superiority of two to one he might overcome the resistance of the British. On the other hand, the facts that he could make little effective use of his artillery nor any close reconnoissance of his adversary's position might well have made him pause; but, against this, his imperfect information led him to understand that every day's delay signified an increase of the Allied forces. The

1810. accomplishment of Wellington's concentration in ample  
Sept. 27. time to meet him was in fact a great surprise, which he had not in the least foreseen.

Working, therefore, in the dark, as Massena did, his orders were dictated under misapprehension, and so were faulty: He assumed Picton's division to be the right of the Allied line, and that Reynier's columns on striking the array at that point would practically turn Wellington's right. This is evident by his instruction that, on gaining the summit, Reynier was to form close column and follow the crest of the hill to the convent of Bussaco,<sup>1</sup> which is to say that Reynier was to turn to his right and begin to roll up the British array. When this movement had begun, Ney was to start on his attack, and not before, unless he should observe that Wellington was weakening his left to support his right against Reynier. Now, no sane General would have ordered Reynier to execute such a movement if he had been aware that, on wheeling towards the convent, the Second Corps would have left fifteen thousand hostile infantry close in the rear. Nor could the Eighth Corps have helped Reynier out of his difficulty, for it was massed in rear of Ney's corps three miles away, and could only have reached the Second Corps by a march along a bad road over steep wooded hills. The whole plan of Massena's attack was therefore absurd, though of that he could not be aware.

Lastly, the French leaders were unfair to their

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oman construes Massena's orders to mean that Reynier, after piercing the British line, was to "re-form his men and drop down the reverse slope of the heights on to the Coimbra road, along which he was to pass in the direction of the convent of Bussaco towards the rear of Wellington's centre." But Massena's words are: "Il (Reynier) descendra par la crête de la montagne sur le chemin de Coimbra. *Le point où il devra s'arrêter est le couvent de Bussaco.* . . . Le Maréchal Ney disposera ses deux colonnes d'attaque de manière à donner quand le Général Reynier sera maître des hauteurs, et *qu'il marchera sur le couvent de Bussaco.*" Therefore Reynier's march upon the convent was meant to be in sight of Ney, that is to say, the comb, not on the reverse side of the hill.

troops. There can be no doubt that they hurried<sup>1810.</sup> their men far too fast up the ascent. Napier says that<sup>Sept. 27.</sup> Reynier's first attacking columns were close to the summit of the hill within half an hour after they started. This is almost incredible,<sup>1</sup> yet it is certain that the French infantry scaled the height with great rapidity, probably for two reasons. First, the men were mostly young soldiers,<sup>2</sup> eager to show themselves worthy of the famous names of their regiments; and secondly, the sharp-shooters of the Allies, pursuant to Wellington's practice,<sup>3</sup> were in great strength, overmastering the French skirmishers and galling the advancing columns severely. The officers naturally hastened the men forward to end this annoyance the more quickly; and, being themselves encumbered with no heavy weights, probably set an example of speed which the men strained themselves to follow.<sup>4</sup> No doubt the mounted officers, until their horses were shot—and only one horse on the French side reached the plateau<sup>5</sup>—aggravated the evil. Lastly, the hill of Bussaco, even as other hills, rises in tiers. Each slope seems to be the last, and each when surmounted is found to lead to another, a deception very well calculated to make ardent young soldiers exhaust themselves in a series of supreme efforts. The result

<sup>1</sup> I speak with some confidence, having climbed the hill of Bussaco myself, over rock and heather, as did the French troops. I am not a slow mover, and I was not carrying a heavy musket, ammunition, and pack, but I should have been sorry to undertake to accomplish the ascent in much less than forty-five minutes.

<sup>2</sup> Foy wrote a fortnight before the battle, "Before the Revolution our armies were composed of men commanded by children; now they are composed of children commanded by men." Girod de l'Ain, *Vie du Général Foy*, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> I must remind the reader that we owe the elucidation of this most important point wholly to Mr. Oman.

<sup>4</sup> The head of Ney's column, according to Booth (*Levinge's Hist. Records of the 43rd*), consisted at the moment of Craufurd's counter-attack chiefly of officers.

<sup>5</sup> This animal belonged to Foy's aide-de-camp and was mounted by him after his own had been killed. He was struck by two bullets near the summit. Girod de l'Ain, p. 102.



1810. was that columns, battalions, and regiments became  
Sept. 27. disordered and intermixed, and that the men came up to the English line so breathless and spent that they had no physical or moral force left in them. They melted away before a counter-attack as do snow-flakes in May beneath the first touch of the sun. It was greatly to their honour that they ever reached the Allied line at all.

None the less, full credit must be given to the British troops who did the decisive work of the day. Massena threw twenty-six thousand men into the fighting line; they were repulsed by little more than half their numbers, perhaps fifteen thousand men, all skirmishers included. When taking the offensive the British battalions faced enormous odds without hesitation, particularly the Forty-fifth and Eighty-eighth, which at the moment of their charge did not exceed ten companies jointly. The performance of these two regiments indeed bears comparison with that of any of the British corps engaged at Inkermann; and Wellington in his public despatch stated that he had never witnessed a more gallant attack. It is to be noted that the charges of the British infantry with the bayonet were delivered in line, not in column, which is the normal formation for shock-action. George Napier, however, records that he formed his company of the Fifty-second into column while advancing with the bayonet, so that the principle at any rate was recognised.

It remains only to notice the criticism which has been levelled by British artillery-men against Wellington's handling of his guns at Bussaco. It is contended by the historian of the Royal Regiment that, instead of massing his cannon in reserve until the attack should develop itself, the General distributed his pieces on the "easiest parts of the position," where it was supposed that the French would attack, and that in these stations they were so placed as to offer an excellent mark for the enemy's fire. This was especially true, it was said,

of Arentschild's two Portuguese batteries on the San Antonio road. Now Wellington's relations with his gunners were not of the happiest, chiefly because they, as the children of the Master of the Ordnance, were less immediately under his control than the rest of the army; and it must be admitted that, taking the Peninsular War from beginning to end, the artillery had some cause of complaint against the General. But on this occasion the prejudice of the gunners in favour of their own arm has carried them too far. It may be questioned, in the first place, whether it would have been prudent to mass the batteries at all when a position nine miles long was in question. In the second place, it is certain that the guns were not arbitrarily set down upon mere conjecture of Massena's movements, but that they were disposed at the threatened points as the enemy's intentions revealed themselves. Arentschild's battery, in particular, was not brought up to the pass of San Antonio until it was certain that Reynier's column was advancing upon it;<sup>1</sup> nor does it appear that this battery suffered any great loss until Foy's brigade began to move up the hill. It is therefore evident that, however good the mark that they presented, Reynier's guns must have fired at them for two or three hours before doing any damage. It is, indeed, more than probable that the part played by the Allied artillery at Bussaco has been undervalued. Without absolutely accepting the statement of the brother of Ross, of the Chestnut Troop, that the greatest loss sustained by the French was through the fire of cannon, it is certain that the Allied batteries did admirable work and that, in Craufurd's position in particular, the shrapnel-shell of

<sup>1</sup> Grattan of the Eighty-eighth saw it moving thither at the trot. *Adventures in the Connaught Rangers*, i. 49. As to the damage done by Reynier's guns, see Leith's narrative in Wellington's *Suppl. Desp.* vi. 637. The French gunners must latterly have trained their guns, possibly only their howitzers, at a great elevation, or possibly they may have brought up pieces of larger calibre, for Leith speaks of the 3/1st of Barnes's brigade coming under artillery fire on the plateau, though the regiment suffered no casualties.

1810. Ross's guns wrought terrible havoc among the masses of Ney's division.

For the rest, all arms did their duty well at Bussaco. The two principal attacks of the French being delivered at points far apart and hidden from each other by the projecting spurs of the hill, each of the British divisions engaged thought that it had borne the brunt of the action, and was disinclined to allow much credit to the other. Hence the great historian of the war, being of the Light Division, believed readily that Picton's division had been broken by the first onset and only rescued by Leith; and has thus involved one portion of his narrative in hopeless confusion. Picton, in his turn, thought that Leith's share in the action was a mere shadow of his own; whereas Leith was persuaded that he and no one else had repelled Reynier's attack. As a matter of fact all three did excellent service, though on this particular occasion Craufurd's merit shone brightest. But, above all things, Bussaco established the moral superiority of the British over the French soldier.

*Authorities.*—For Reynier's attack: Cannon's *Record of the 74th*; Leith Hay's *Narrative*; Grattan's *Adventures in the Connaught Rangers*; Sherer's *Recollections of the Peninsula*; *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*; Narratives of Leith and Picton, Wellington, *Suppl. Desp.* vi. 633-639; Gomme's *Life of Sir William Gomme*; Wrottesley's *Life of Sir J. Burgoyne*. For Ney's attack: Charles Napier's *Early Military Life*; Napier's *History*, v. vi. Appendices. I must acknowledge to the full my obligations to the researches of Mr. Oman, who has repeatedly visited the ground, whereas my own study of it was confined to two full days only; and to those of Mr. Chambers, whose little monograph, though in need of correction on sundry small points, I have found very useful.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

THOUGH reeling for the moment under his repulse, <sup>1810.</sup> Massena was not the man lightly to abandon the object prescribed to him by his master. He could hardly hope, after the experience of the 27th, to force the position of Bussaco ; but his cavalry might yet find him a route, even though none were shown on the map, by which he might turn it. Accordingly, early on the 28th he sent out his troopers to explore the country <sup>Sept. 28.</sup> north and south, and soon after noon became aware that the road by Boialvo to Sardão existed and was practicable for artillery. Thereupon he made a succession of feints, as if about to renew his attack ; though the corps of Ney and Reynier could be seen throwing up entrenchments, which contradicted all idea of an offensive movement. Wellington, undeceived by these appearances, enjoined vigilance at all points ; and before nightfall the sight of French infantry retiring eastward, and of French cavalry riding over the Serra do Caramullo northward, made it certain that Massena's whole army was or would soon be in motion. Wellington watched them intently for a time, and then riding to the convent, ordered that the retreat from Bussaco, for which he had already given provisional directions, should begin forthwith with all possible silence and secrecy ; the camp-fires being kept up to give the appearance of continued occupation of the Serra. Hill accordingly passed the Mondego, followed by Lecor and Fane, and marched on Thomar, while the bulk of the army retired during the night by

1810. various cross-roads upon Fornos and Coimbra, leaving  
Sept. 28. only the Light Division and Anson's brigade of Light Cavalry on the ridge of Bussaco.

There can be no doubt that at the moment and for some weeks later Wellington was much vexed and disturbed by Massena's movement, which he at once divined to be upon Sardão. He had, it will be remembered, summoned Trant with his Portuguese militia to that place; and, counting upon his arrival there on the 27th, he had reckoned upon barring the way permanently to the French at Bussaco. "I should have stopped the enemy entirely," he wrote to his brother on the 4th of October, "if it had not been for the blunders of the Portuguese General commanding in the north, who was prevented by a small French patrol from sending Trant on the road by which he was ordered to march. If he had come by that road, the French could not have turned our position and they must have attacked it again; they could not have carried it and must have retired."<sup>1</sup> It is perfectly true that General Bacellar, frightened by the presence of a French patrol at San Pedro do Sul, had ordered Trant to fetch a compass by way of Oporto instead of taking the direct route, and that consequently Trant did not arrive at Sardão till the evening of the 28th, "after," to use Wellington's words, "the enemy was in possession of the ground." What ground is here referred to it is not easy to say, for Trant was still at Sardão on the 30th, though with the main body of the French cavalry close to him; but presumably it was some defile where Trant, given sufficient time, might either have destroyed the road or held it, even with his two or three thousand raw levies, against the French army. Wellington had, of course, ample time to detach a force to Sardão before the French could reach it; but, as he pointed out later, if this detachment were hard pressed and obliged to retire, it could only move northward and so be lost

<sup>1</sup> *Suppl. Desp.* vi. 606.

for ever from the defence of Lisbon. To Trant this 1810, was a matter of no moment, for his base was in the north, so that to him such a retreat would simply mean a march home ;<sup>1</sup> but the essence of Wellington's campaign was to preserve the capital. He had made the place safe, as he thought, by the fortified lines of Torres Vedras ; and, with a certain refuge behind him, it was not worth his while to risk anything till he reached it. In such a case, it will be asked, why did he fight at Bussaco ? All histories agree in calling it a political battle, fought to reassure the British Parliament and the Portuguese Regency ; and all histories admit that it had its effect. But this seems to be not quite the whole truth. Unless Wellington deliberately lied to his brother and to Liverpool, he reckoned upon checking Massena for good at Bussaco, and was not a little disappointed at his failure to do so.

Meanwhile, the French army drew off by divisions in succession, Sainte-Croix's dragoons leading the way, with the infantry of Junot's corps next after them. Ney did not march until the night of the 28th, nor did Reynier follow until the 29th. About four hundred Sept. 29. unhappy Frenchmen, too severely injured to be moved, were left behind and were taken by the German Hussars to the convent. The rest were carried off, a great many of them on stretchers ; and an officer of Ney's corps has recorded that the night-march of the 28th was the most distressing that he ever made, the corpses of the wounded who died and were left by the roadside being sufficient to guide the rear columns through the darkness.<sup>2</sup> The British cavalry watched the decampment by patrols from Mealhada ; but until late on the 29th Wellington was still without certain reports as to Massena's ultimate direction, though the foremost of the enemy's vanguard on that day reached Avellão de Cima, less than twenty miles north of Coimbra, and a little to

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum on the campaign of 1810, 23rd Feb. 1811.

<sup>2</sup> Guingret, p. 70.

1810. east of the direct road leading southward to that city from Sardão. These horsemen, by using a cross-road, Sept. 30. had evaded Trant, who on the following day attempted to hold back the main body of the French force, but was obliged to make a hurried retreat. On the same night Anson's brigade, which now formed the extreme rear-guard of the British cavalry, bivouacked near Fornos in the presence of the Oct. 1 enemy's advanced parties, and early on the morrow was driven back by infantry in some disorder to the plain of Coimbra, where it found the brigades of De Grey and Slade. After a serious skirmish, in which the German Hussars suffered some loss, the whole passed the Mondego by a ford and fell back safely to Soure.

So far, the army had retreated in at least three columns; Hill upon Thomar, as we have seen; Spencer, by the same ford as the cavalry, to west of Coimbra upon Soure; and the remainder by the great road. On the 30th the last of the troops left Coimbra amid a scene of wild confusion. In spite of Wellington's warnings, only the rich had had the prudence to withdraw to Lisbon; and three-fourths of the population were streaming along the road with such property as they could carry in bundles upon their heads, filling the air with wails and lamentations. But this was not the worst; for, over and above many valuable goods, they had left abundance of provisions in their houses, which could not fail to be of great assistance to the French. Massena, it appears, foreseeing that this would be so,<sup>1</sup> forbade the entrance of his troops into the city, and sent a commandant and Taupin's brigade forward to guard the gates; but Junot and his staff forced the sentries, and, with this example before them, the soldiery could not be kept out. The city was sacked from roof to cellar, with much wanton damage and destruction of sacred and beautiful objects and buildings.

<sup>1</sup> So says the renegade Pamplona in *Aperçu Nouveau*, p. 155, which is confirmed by A. D. L. G., *Campagne de Portugal*, p. 70.

The Eighth Corps, being the first on the spot, enjoyed <sup>1810.</sup> the first of the plunder, but the Sixth, which was marched in next day to restore order, took its share. The Oct. 2. officers were as rapacious as the men ; and Massena himself is said finally to have countenanced the pillage by taking telescopes from the observatory. Ney alone seems to have held aloof from the disgraceful scene, refusing even to accept a field-glass which was offered to him by his less scrupulous chief.<sup>1</sup>

For two days, therefore, on the 1st and 2nd of October, the French army was practically out of action ; and Wellington pursued his retreat unharassed, headquarters being on the 2nd at Pombal, and on the 3rd Oct. 2-4. and 4th at Leiria. He too had his troubles with plunderers, but met the danger vigorously, hanging on one day two British soldiers and as many Portuguese, whom he had caught red-handed. Meanwhile Massena, knowing nothing of the lines of Torres Vedras, was not a little puzzled by the continued retirement of an army which had buffeted him so heavily at Bussaco ; and there was some debate between him and his generals as to whether he ought to halt at Coimbra, convert it into an advanced base, and await the arrival of the Ninth Corps before going farther ; or whether he should prosecute his advance with all speed so as to overtake the British before they could re-embark. He decided upon the latter course ; and accordingly Montbrun's cavalry, the Eighth Corps, and one division of Ney's crossed the Mondego on the 3rd. Oct. 3.

There remained the question of the garrison that should be left at Coimbra, where Massena had decided to deposit his sick and wounded, amounting to over four thousand men, and the more cumbrous part of his baggage-train ; and on this point the Marshal came to a resolution so hardy that he dared not reveal it to his army. Every commanding officer was asking what the strength of the garrison would be, and the answer was vaguely given as several

<sup>1</sup> Authorities in Oman, iii. 403-404.



1810. battalions. Many colonels therefore decided to leave even the slightly wounded and footsore behind ; though Marchand's division, upon a hint from its General, brought on every man or officer who could crawl or
- Oct. 4. ride. On the 4th the entire army quitted Coimbra, leaving for the protection of the invalids only one hundred and forty seamen,<sup>1</sup> who had accompanied the army to do duty in the tidal waters of Lisbon, with thirty-five hundred muskets to arm the convalescents as they came out of hospital. So agitated were the unfortunate patients that their comrades were obliged to calm them with a story that the battalions of the garrison had gone out to find oxen for the sick.<sup>2</sup> Massena's excuse was that, with a decisive battle in immediate prospect, he could not afford to weaken his army by three or four thousand men ; and, considering that he expected to end the campaign within a week, such an excuse cannot be called unreasonable.
- Oct. 5. On the morning of the 5th the French advanced cavalry regained touch with the British near Pombal, and gradually drove them back after some sharp skirmishing which cost each side from forty to fifty men ; and it was from the British prisoners taken in these affairs that Massena, so it is said, first heard vaguely
- Oct. 6. of the existence of "the Lines." On the following day the extreme rear of the British rear-guard fell back to Cavalhaes, a little to east of the main road, and on the
- Oct. 7. 7th beyond Rio Mayor. On that day the whole body of the French infantry reached Leiria, where Massena learned that his sin had found him out. Trant, pursuant to Wellington's orders, had come down from the Vouga and followed up the march of the enemy to gather in
- Oct. 6. stragglers, arriving at Mealhada on the 6th. Hearing there of the defenceless state of Coimbra, he advanced rapidly with about four thousand militia and a few dragoons, captured the French post at Fornos to a man, and charging into Coimbra by two parallel streets,

<sup>1</sup> *Aperçu Nouveau* says that there were only sixty-one.

<sup>2</sup> Guingret, pp. 85-86.

overpowered all opposition. His cavalry then seized the 1810.  
bridge, cutting off all communication between the French  
in the town and those in the hospital, which had been  
formed in a huge convent in a suburb to south of the  
Mondego ; and, after a short resistance from some of  
the convalescents, the whole surrendered. Colonels  
Wilson and Miller joined him on the 8th with three Oct. 8.  
hundred stragglers, whom they had captured on their  
way down from Celorico ; and Trant, leaving Coimbra to  
them, took the whole body of his prisoners, four thousand  
five hundred in all, in carts and on foot to Oporto.  
The Portuguese militia massacred a very few of the  
French before they could be checked, but, speaking  
generally, the unfortunate men were treated well. The  
most important effect of this stroke was that it not  
only embittered Massena's men against their commander,  
but impaired their confidence in him.

On the 8th the fine weather broke, and the British  
rear-guard fell back to Alcoentre, where, by extraordinary  
folly on the part of Cotton's staff, Bull's troop of horse-  
artillery was left, contrary to orders, in the village, and  
the drivers were allowed to take their harness to pieces,  
while Anson's and Slade's brigades of cavalry were  
planted down a mile in the rear. One squadron of the  
Sixteenth, which had been left to watch the enemy, was  
driven in during the afternoon by two regiments of French  
horse ; and the guns were then obliged to retreat in the  
greatest confusion. Somers-Cocks of the Sixteenth,  
however, hastily collected his squadron, and, riding into  
the village, charged the French, who retired hurriedly  
with a loss of eighteen killed and taken.<sup>1</sup> On the  
following day the Sixteenth and German Hussars were Oct. 9.  
constantly in action with the enemy's dragoons, always  
in pouring rain ; and, as usual, in every conflict of the  
small bodies engaged the Allies had the better. The  
casualties numbered about fifty on each side, and this  
day brought the arduous work of Anson's brigade to an

<sup>1</sup> Tomkinson, pp. 50-51. *Memoirs of Viscount Combermere*, i.  
164-165.

1810. end, for on the 10th the whole of the British horse  
Oct. 10. entered the lines of Torres Vedras. "On every occasion," wrote Wellington, "their superiority has been so great that the enemy does not use his cavalry except when supported and protected by his infantry."

Under the shelter of the British squadrons, the foot had retreated at their leisure into the chosen refuge; but Craufurd's division, which was the only infantry in the rear-guard, for some reason best known to its commander, was still outside the lines at Alemquer on the afternoon of the 10th. The troops were under shelter cooking their dinners, when the alarm was given that the enemy was at hand with both sabres and bayonets. The division was quickly under arms, and there was nothing to prevent an unhurried and orderly retreat. As at the Coa, however, Craufurd lost his head. The road which he must take lay through a narrow archway, a circumstance which in itself demanded above all things coolness and regularity; but, on the contrary, he commanded his men to break their ranks, and to re-form when they had passed through it. Naturally there was a rush of soldiers, followers, and baggage-animals for the archway; many were injured in the crush, and had not the soldiers been of the best quality, there would have been a general panic. Happily the great majority of the officers and men disobeyed the order and stood firm, and the immediate evil extended no further than to the loss of a little baggage.

Then followed a singular chain of accidents. The station of the Light Division was at Arruda; but Craufurd in the dark took the wrong road and found himself at Sobral, some ten miles too far to the west, from whence he was obliged to march along the foot of the lines to his true destination. Cavalry patrols, meeting stragglers from his battalions, were told by them that the Light Division was cut off, which news seemed to be confirmed by the unoccupied state of Arruda; and General Hill, feeling anxious for the safety of the second line of defence, fell back from Alhandra, on the

right flank of the first line, to Alverca, in order to be sure of holding, at any rate, the third line. Thus for some hours the entire front of the works from Alhandra to Sobral, a distance of nine miles, was unmanned, until in the course of the night the mistake was discovered, and the former positions reoccupied. There was, however, little danger, for the mass of the French infantry was still far in rear.

It is now time to say something of the lines themselves. First, it must be premised that the country from Torres Vedras to Lisbon resembles nothing so much as a gigantic mountain-torrent instantaneously converted into solid earth. The ground flows down from north to south in great undulations, which now and again throw up abrupt peaks ending in a knob of bare rock, only to plunge down again into deep gullies and ravines; the character of the whole being rugged and inhospitable, and suggesting even at first sight innumerable facilities for a stubborn rear-guard fight. Wellington's earliest idea had been to construct his first line from Alhandra on the east to Rio São Lourenço on the west, with advanced works at Torres Vedras, Monte de Agraça, and other commanding points. The tardiness of Massena's movements, however, had enabled him to strengthen the first line sufficiently to warrant his holding it in permanence. Surveying this line from east to west, the first section from Alhandra almost to Arruda was about five miles long, of which one mile, towards the Tagus, had been inundated; more than another mile had been scarped into a precipice, and the most vulnerable point had been obstructed by a huge abatis. The additional defences included twenty-three redoubts mounting ninety-six guns, besides a flotilla of gunboats to guard the right flank on the Tagus; and this portion of the ground was occupied by Hill's division.

The second section extended from Arruda to the west of Monte Agraça, which last was crowned by a very large redoubt mounting twenty-five guns, with three smaller works to supplement it. Monte Agraça itself

1810. was held by Pack's brigade with Leith's division in reserve behind it, while the strong but less completely fortified country to eastward was entrusted to the Light Division.

The third section stretched from the west of Monte Agraça for nearly eight miles to the gorge of the Zizandre, a little to south of Torres Vedras. This was by nature very advantageous ground, but from want of time had been no further strengthened than by two redoubts which commanded the road from Sobral to Montachique. Here, therefore, were concentrated the First, Fourth, and Sixth Divisions, under the eye of Wellington himself, who had established his headquarters at Pero Negro.

The last and most westerly section of the first line ran from the gorge of the Zizandre to the sea, a distance of nearly twelve miles, more than half of which, however, on the western side had been rendered impassable by the damming of the Zizandre and by the conversion of its lower reaches into one huge inundation. The chief defence consisted of the entrenched camp of São Vicente, a little to the north of Torres Vedras, which dominated the paved road leading from Leiria to Lisbon; and the force assigned to this portion of the ground was Picton's division.

The second line of defence was still more formidable, but, since the enemy was never able to force the first line, it must suffice to say that along all three of its sections from Quintella on the Tagus to Bucellas, from Bucellas to Mafra, and from Mafra to the sea—a total distance of twenty-two miles—the British engineers had lavished every resource of construction and destruction to close all possible points of access to an enemy.

Lastly, in the event of failure even in the face of all these precautions, very powerful lines, two miles long, had been thrown up round São Julião to cover an embarkation.

The total number of troops to Wellington's hand

for the defence of the entire position amounted, 1810. exclusive of two battalions of marines in the lines round São Julião, to forty-two thousand British, of whom thirty-five thousand were effective ; in addition to which he had over twenty-seven thousand Portuguese regulars, of whom twenty-four thousand were effective ; about twelve thousand Portuguese militia ; and twenty or thirty thousand of the *ordenança*, which last were of little value except for guerilla warfare. Lastly, Romana with great generosity brought eight thousand Spaniards of his division likewise within the lines about Mafra. Altogether, therefore, Wellington had some sixty thousand regular troops whom he could depend upon, and twenty thousand more who could be trusted at least to fight behind earthworks. The redoubts of the first line did not require more than twenty thousand men to defend them, which left the whole of the true field-army free not only to reinforce any threatened point but also to make a counter-attack. To facilitate such movements a chain of signal-stations had been formed from end to end of the lines, and lateral roads of communication had been made so as to enable the troops to pass rapidly along their entire length. Finally, as has been well pointed out, Wellington did not abuse his fortified position by distributing his troops, according to the vicious cordon-system, in small fractions along the entire front, but kept his field-army for the most part in two masses on the centre and right, so that the whole could be assembled in a few hours. It is too often assumed that the success of the lines of Torres Vedras was due to mere skilful use of the spade. Colonel Fletcher, who was entrusted with the execution of Wellington's broad designs, deserves, together with his subordinates of the engineers, all credit for his ingenuity and thoroughness ; but, given time, labour, and favourable ground, it does not need a great general to construct a formidable line of entrenchments. On the other hand, it does require a great general so to use such a line that it shall always

1810. be a source of strength and not of weakness. Villars at La Bassée flattered himself to his cost that he had found Marlborough's *ne plus ultra*; but to check great leaders such as Marlborough and Massena there must be not only lines but a man.

- Oct. 11. On the 11th of October Montbrun, through his cavalry, ascertained that there was a continuous range of entrenchments from the Tagus to the gorge of the Zizandre, and reported accordingly; but the French infantry, Taupin's brigade excepted, was still far in rear, much distressed by the incessant rain; and the day passed without any serious incident. On the afternoon
- Oct. 12. of the 12th the Eighth Corps came up to Sobral and pushed back the British outposts from the village after a small skirmish; whereupon Wellington, not knowing what force might be behind Junot, concentrated in the night five British divisions and three Portuguese brigades along the front of the Serra de
- Oct. 13. Agraça. On the 13th there was more skirmishing, which cost each side about one hundred and fifty killed and wounded, with no further result than to press the British back somewhat from their advanced positions
- Oct. 14. beyond the lines; and on the 14th there was a rather sharper affair, when Junot attempted, though without success, to dislodge a picquet of the Seventy-first from its station behind Sobral and Monte de Agraça. In the middle of this engagement Massena at last came up to the front, and reconnoitred the ground for himself. The renegade Portuguese on his staff had told him that he would find nothing but undulating accessible plateaux before him; and they now excused themselves for their misinformation by saying that the Allies had thrown up the various obstructions that barred the way of the French Army. "Hang it all, they did not throw up these mountains," answered the Marshal bitterly, and continued his reconnaissance. It is said that Junot advocated a bold onslaught upon the British army before Sobral; and the British themselves looked forward with jubilant confidence to a speedy attack.

But Massena had not forgotten Bussaco ; he would 1810. commit himself to nothing rash or foolish ; and he soon came to the conclusion that the lines were impregnable.

On the following day Wellington was startled out Sept. 15. of his usual tranquillity and composure by a false report that the enemy had contrived to seize forty boats at Santarem. Such a misfortune, as he rightly said, would have been most serious, for the boats might have been used either for a bridge to an island in the Tagus, where the French could have established themselves across Hill's right flank, or to establish communication with Mortier and lay open Alemtejo to invasion. Another twenty-four hours, however, showed him that the report was without foundation, and he was able to write once more, "I am firmly of opinion that the enemy cannot succeed."<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Massena calmly sat down in front of the lines, bidding the Eighth Corps to entrench itself before Sobral ; the Second Corps being stationed at Carregado, with advanced troops at Villa Franca ; the Sixth at Otta, with a detachment at Alemquer ; and Treilhard's division of dragoons at Alcoentre. But this was mere bravado, for the Marshal was bound to retreat sooner or later from want of supplies ; and, indeed, if Wellington's injunctions for clearing the country had been enforced by the Portuguese Government, the French could not have remained where they were for more than a few days. Massena, indeed, did talk of holding his position until the Ninth Corps, under Drouet, should have reached him from France, and Mortier's corps from Andalusia should have invaded Alemtejo ; but this was probably mere verbiage, intended to tickle the ear of Napoleon. Drouet's corps had reached Valladolid and there had stuck ; Mortier, as we have seen, had retired towards Seville ; but Massena had not the slightest information concerning either of them. The Portuguese militia and *ordenança*

<sup>1</sup> Berkeley to Wellington, 14th, 16th Oct. (*Wellington MSS.*) ; Wellington to Admiral Berkeley, 16th, 17th Oct. 1810.



1810. under Trant, Wilson, and other leaders had closed in everywhere upon the French communications; Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo were straitly blockaded, and not a message could pass through them inwards or outwards. Massena's true intentions were shown by his withdrawing his reserves of cavalry and artillery, together with his hospital, to Santarem, and by an order to send to the same place every artificer to be found in the ranks of the army. It was necessary, as he said, to have the means of passing the Zezere in the direction of Castello Branco, and of crossing the Tagus into Alemtejo; and these means were to be created at Santarem. Meanwhile the Marshal nourished faint hopes either that the Portuguese refugees in Lisbon would rise against the British, or that Wellington would move out of his lines for a general action.<sup>1</sup>

Wellington apprehended the situation at once, and called upon the Portuguese Government to take measures for the removal of all supplies of food and valuable property from Alemtejo, and for enabling the Allies to follow the enemy thither.<sup>2</sup> But he was fairly confident that no materials for a bridge would be obtained easily by the French, since he had been careful to collect or destroy all boats. Meanwhile deserters came over in large numbers from the French army with stories of privation, sickness, and want; and the British commander was satisfied that his adversary's force was silently but surely melting away. His one doubt was whether he ought not to attack. Massena's army was weakened by the absence of marauding parties, and also by the despatch of a detachment to Thomar and of Loison's division towards Santarem; while Junot's corps, little more than ten thousand strong, lay in dangerous isolation about Sobral. The temptation was very great, but Wellington withstood it; first, because it was quite

<sup>1</sup> *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, pp. 340-347; Massena to Fririon, 25th Oct., to Berthier, 29th Oct. 1810 (printed in *Wellington Desp.* iv. 814-816).

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to C. Stuart, 23rd Oct. 1810.

evident that Massena wanted him to come out and fight ; secondly, because he could not have delivered any but a frontal attack without opening the road to Lisbon, and he could not afford to lose many men ;<sup>1</sup> and, thirdly and chiefly, because his success would probably bring about the raising of the siege of Cadiz, and the transfer of Soult's army to Portugal. These would have been the most undesirable of results. It was very much better that the French should waste their strength over Cadiz and other "unattainable objects" than that they should turn the whole of their force towards Lisbon. Wellington could not at best hope for more than a partial victory, the gain of which would be wholly neutralised by the rectification of a great French blunder. The General spoke of his policy as the "safe game" ; it was really a very deep game, the game of encouraging his enemy to persist in his mistakes.<sup>2</sup>

None the less, looking to the French preparations at Santarem, Wellington was bound to watch the left bank of the Tagus carefully ; and, accordingly, on the 1st of November he ordered Fane to take a brigade of Portuguese cavalry and a battalion of Caçadores across the river, in order to observe the enemy's movements on the right bank, to prevent them from crossing to the left bank, and to destroy, if possible, their store of boats and timber at Santarem. The attention of this force, and indeed of Wellington himself, was distracted for a few days by a curious circumstance. Realising the extreme awkwardness of his position, Massena had resolved to despatch an officer of trust to Napoleon to lay the whole situation before him, and to obtain instructions and reinforcements. General Foy was the man selected for this mission ; and, with the object of

<sup>1</sup> "Lord Wellington said in the lines one day while looking from Sobral fort at the French encampments, 'I could lick those fellows any day, but it would cost me 10,000 men, and, as this is the last army England has, we must take care of it.'" *MS. Journal of Col. James Stanhope*, for the perusal of which I am indebted to the most kindly courtesy of the Hon. Richard Stanhope.

<sup>2</sup> Wellington to Liverpool, 27th Oct., 3rd Nov. 1810.

1810. ensuring his safe arrival, not only was he provided with an escort of a strong squadron of horse and a battalion of infantry, but a feint advance was made by Montbrun with a small mixed force against Abrantes. The diversion was perfectly successful. Montbrun forced the passage of the Zezere at Punhete after a sharp skirmish, drawing upon himself all the attention of Colonel Lobo at Abrantes; and Foy, passing the river by a ford, took the road to Castello Branco. His strength was so much magnified by report that Don Carlos d'España burned the bridge at Villa Velha lest it should fall into his hands, and Lobo took up the bridge at Abrantes. Wellington himself was quite prepared for an attack upon that fortress, and had made up his mind to succour it. For the best part of a fortnight he remained in uncertainty, until,
- Nov. 11. on the 11th, Fane reported that the enemy was re-
- Nov. 13. passing the Zezere. Two days later Fane attempted, though without success, to burn the enemy's stores at Santarem by means of Congreve rockets, a weapon of which Wellington was not enamoured; but on
- Nov. 14. the morrow the French made the movement which Wellington had been long expecting; and the situation was changed.

- For some days the greater part of Massena's army had been dispersed in all directions to seek food, with no greater success than to avert actual starvation;<sup>1</sup> and
- Nov. 10. on the 10th the Marshal gave the order for a general retreat upon Santarem. The sick were taken away first,
- Nov. 13. and then the transport; on the 13th the reserves of
- Nov. 14. stores followed, and on the evening of the 14th the infantry silently marched off. Ney's corps, being out of sight of the British, was the first to retire; then came the task of withdrawing the Eighth Corps, with Ferey's brigade attached to it, a most delicate matter, for the narrow defile of Alemquer lay on its road, and unless Hill were kept in check, he might reach Alemquer

<sup>1</sup> Fririon to Massena, 8th Nov. 1810 (intercepted), in *Wellington Desp.* iv. 817.

before Junot and cut him off. Reynier was therefore <sup>1810.</sup> instructed to remain at Villafranca and Carregado, so as to hold Hill at bay until Junot should be safe. The operation was seconded by fortune, for from midnight until ten o'clock on the morning of the 15th a dense <sup>Nov. 15.</sup> fog concealed everything from the British; and by that time both Junot and Ney were in surety, while even Reynier was two hours forward in his march to Cartaxo.

The enemy's departure was first discovered by the Sixth Division; and by twenty minutes past ten Wellington had set Spencer's division in motion towards Alemquer, ordering Craufurd to feel his way upon the same point with the Light Division, and directing Hill to advance on Carregado. He had heard on the previous evening that a considerable French reinforcement had reached the frontier of Upper Beira on the 9th, and he was therefore disposed to act with caution. Moreover, Massena's intentions were necessarily a matter of conjecture. Wellington hoped that he might retire into Spain, either across the Zezere, over which he had built a bridge, or across the Tagus; but he might also pass the Tagus with a view to an attack on Abrantes; or, lastly, he might take up a position at Santarem and try to open communications with Ciudad Rodrigo across the Zezere. Of these four courses, Wellington considered the attack on Abrantes to be the likeliest. He therefore directed Fane to move his force over against that fortress on the south bank of the Tagus, and sent to Admiral Berkeley for boats to enable him to throw Hill's division across the river. Fane and Hill would then be well placed either to succour Abrantes or, if Massena should retreat, to recross the river by the bridge at that place and follow him through Upper Beira. In the general uncertainty, however, Wellington refrained for the present from drawing more troops out of the lines.

Meanwhile Spencer and Craufurd, as they advanced, found many evidences of the sufferings of

1810. the French army. The road was covered with the  
Nov. 15. carcasses of draught-animals which had perished for want of forage, while ghastly emaciated corpses of French soldiers showed that it was not mules and horses only that had fallen from starvation. Still more terrible were the tokens of deadly strife between French and Portuguese. Every village and town on the road had been sacked from cellar to garret, and the contents of the houses battered to pieces ; the bodies of peasants who had been murdered by soldiers, and of soldiers who had been murdered by peasants, were mingled together ; and every sick Frenchman who had the misfortune to remain undiscovered by the British was slaughtered without mercy by their enraged allies. On  
Nov. 16. the 16th Wellington ordered Slade's cavalry and Pack's Portuguese brigade out of the lines to support the advancing force ; and on the next day were shown the defects of an army which lives by marauding. The country was full of small French parties which had been absent for days in search of food, and in consequence had received no notice of their commander's retirement. When overtaken they surrendered themselves and their booty with little or no resistance ; and a sergeant of the Sixteenth Light Dragoons, Baxter by name, with a patrol of four men, by sheer daring and audacity captured a French officer and forty-one soldiers. On that evening Craufurd came up near Cartaxo with a division of Reynier's corps, which was covering the withdrawal of the baggage over the river Azambuja. Seeing only a small body before him, he at once deployed for attack ; but, fortunately, Wellington interposed before he could commit himself to a contest with superior forces. Massena now halted, having reached the position which he had decided not to abandon without a battle ; and at Santarem, therefore, the first stage of the retreat from the lines of Torres Vedras came to an end. It was the first stage also of a longer retreat, which was ultimately to close at Toulouse in 1814.

At the moment Wellington did not realise the situation. Fane from the left bank of the Tagus had observed French troops and waggons going eastwards ; and, since Massena was reported to have thrown two bridges over the Zezere, the British Commander concluded, not unnaturally, that the entire French army was moving upon Abrantes, and that the force at Santarem was no more than a rear-guard. Deceived by this report, Wellington ordered Hill to cross the Tagus at Vallada with his own division, Hamilton's Portuguese and the Thirteenth Light Dragoons, so as either to succour Abrantes or to fall upon the enemy's flank on their march thither. Hill accordingly passed the river on the 18th ; and on the same day Wellington called up the divisions of Leith and Cole from the lines, himself spending the day in reconnaissance of the French position. On that night Craufurd, having been a second time restrained by Wellington from an intended attack at dawn,<sup>1</sup> took it into his head that the enemy were decamping, and must needs go forward in person with three light infantry-men to assure himself of the fact. The result was that he blundered full upon a French sentry ; the man naturally fired at him ; Craufurd ordered his men to fire back ; and thereupon Reynier's division flew to arms and, as is not uncommon upon such occasions, poured a terrific fire in every direction upon an imaginary foe. This convinced Craufurd that the enemy had at any rate

<sup>1</sup> Colonel James Stanhope in his journal gives the following account of Craufurd on the 17th and 18th : "As Lord Wellington was riding forward near Cartaxo, he met an officer galloping to the rear, who said that Craufurd had found the enemy posted beyond the village, was going to attack them, and had sent for General Grey's cavalry. Lord Wellington rode forward and found apparently two French battalions and a few squadrons at the top of a gentle slope, but presently also the bayonets of a column which was meant to be concealed. He countermanded the attack. Next morning he said, 'We must be off early or Craufurd will be at them' ; and true enough he came just in time to prevent Craufurd from attacking, with his division, a position which the whole army could not have carried."

1810. not retired ; and when morning broke, it was seen  
Nov. 19. that during the night the French had been felling trees on all sides to form abatis, which was at least an indication that they contemplated a lengthened stay about Santarem.

Their position was in truth exceedingly strong. The approach to it lay across a plain, seamed by the two parallel channels of the Rio Mayor, over which the paved road from Lisbon is carried for half a mile upon a raised causeway. On both sides of this causeway the ground was so swampy as to be practically if not actually impassable by formed troops, so that the only access was by the road, which was commanded by a line of low heights whereon Reynier had been careful to establish a battery of sixteen guns. In rear of this line were the lower spurs of the height upon which Santarem stands, ending in a very steep ascent to the mediæval wall which enclosed the town. As regards men to defend this triple line, Reynier's corps, thirteen thousand strong, was the only one actually on the spot ; Junot's corps being stationed at Alcanhede and Pernes, ten to thirteen miles to the north-west, and the main body of Ney's corps at Thomar, with Loison's division in advance on the fertile plain between Santarem and the Zezere.

These dispositions were evidently designed principally to secure a base of supplies in the rich country above mentioned, and at the same time to menace Wellington with a renewal of the offensive, either on the south bank of the Tagus or by a second march southward ; but they left Reynier in apparently perilous isolation, and Reynier was keenly alive to the fact. He sent all encumbrances to the rear, detached a regiment to watch a bridge on the upper reaches of the Rio Mayor, by which his right might be turned, and even pressed for permission to evacuate Santarem. He was answered that he must hold the position to the last, and came to the conclusion that his corps was to be sacrificed to save the other two. Wellington on his side judged himself too weak to attack on the 18th ; but on the

following day, when the First Division had come up, <sup>1810.</sup> he ordered the Light Division to attempt to pass the morass near the Tagus on the enemy's left, sent Pack's brigade to the upper waters of the Rio Mayor to turn the French right, and drew up Spencer's division at the end of the causeway to assail the centre, as soon as the flanking divisions should have made their presence felt. It is pretty clear that he intended to attack in earnest, believing that Massena's main body was still in retreat; but the day's operations came to nothing. Some of Craufurd's skirmishers contrived to reach and to engage the French picquets, but the bulk of his division was stopped by the depth of the swamp. On the opposite flank Pack's infantry was able to cross the river without much difficulty, but the state of the roads was such that the guns could not be brought forward; and the entire attempt was therefore abandoned. To judge by results, it should seem that Massena ran no undue risks when he left Reynier's corps in advance and beyond reach of immediate support, counting upon the incessant rain to protect him. By the evening Wellington came to the conclusion that he had been fortunate in the failure of his movements, and that he had made a mistake when he sent Hill across the Tagus. He therefore directed that General to ascend the river no higher than to Chamusca, though he still talked of an attack upon the morrow, when Leith and Cole should have come up to the front.<sup>1</sup>

On the 20th and 21st, however, the continuance of rain made all movement impossible; and on the 22nd, <sup>Nov. 22.</sup> when Wellington had intended to reconnoitre the French right with Anson's cavalry, he found that Massena had anticipated him and was reconnoitring the British left in considerable force. The Marshal had, in fact, brought forward more than a division of infantry and a formidable body of cavalry to close the gap between Reynier and Junot. His action decided Wellington against further attempt at the offensive. By the 25th he had <sup>Nov. 25.</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Hill, 18th, 19th Nov. 1810.



1810. ascertained definitely that the entire French army was  
Nov. 25. collected between Thomar and Santarem, with a detachment at Punhete on the eastern bank of the *Zezere*. For a moment the British General contemplated a stroke against this detachment, but he speedily decided that it would not only be difficult, owing to the bad state of the roads, but unduly hazardous. Moreover, on the night of the 25th he received intelligence of the advance of five or six thousand French troops, which had already been reported to be on the frontier, through Lower Beira. Wellington rightly judged this column to be composed chiefly of convalescents, and to include no part of the Ninth Corps; but, none the less, the force was one which must be reckoned with. He traced the movements of this body from Ciudad Rodrigo by Sabugal to Cardigos, less than twenty miles from its destination at Punhete, when he heard to his astonishment that it had retired.

The truth was that this column, composed in great measure of skulkers and malingerers collected around the nucleus of Foy's escort and of two battalions from Ciudad Rodrigo, had suffered terribly alike from the weather and the attacks of the peasantry. Encumbered by an unwieldy train of munitions, General Gardanne, who was in command, had made his way southward with infinite difficulty to Cardigos, when he learned through Portuguese deserters from Abrantes, who had been sent out on purpose to deceive him, that Massena was retreating upon Spain by the Mondego, and that Hill was marching from Abrantes with ten thousand men to attack Gardanne's own detachment. Thereupon the French General turned about, and hastened back with all speed to Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington could not believe that any French officer would behave so strangely, but the fact of Gardanne's retreat relieved him of any further anxiety.<sup>1</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Berkeley, 26th Nov.; to Craufurd, 1st Dec.; to Gen. W. Stewart, 4th Dec. 1810. According to Thiébauld (iv. 430) Gardanne was insane at this time.

24th of November he had already begun to withdraw his <sup>1810.</sup> troops to winter-quarters, and by the 1st of December <sup>Dec. 1.</sup> they were all established. The cavalry was extended along the Rio Mayor from Cartaxo to Rio Mayor village; the Light Division was at Valle de Santarem overlooking the marsh which separated them from Reynier; the First Division was about Cartaxo; the Fifth about Alcoentre; the Fourth about Azambuja; the Sixth at Alemquer; the Third at the west end, and the Portuguese at the eastern end of the lines; and Hill's on the south bank of the Tagus at Chamusca and Almeirim. Thus all the roads leading to the lines were covered, and the position made secure.

So ended the campaign of 1810, in a deadlock. Wellington has been blamed because he did not earlier draw the bulk of his forces from the lines, so that he might have overwhelmed Reynier on the 18th; but against this it must be remembered that his object was not so much to beat Massena as to force him to leave Portugal. At one moment he doubted whether he had not made the retreat through Lower Beira too difficult and dangerous for the French, and he was not a little surprised when the Marshal clung to his cantonments about Santarem; indeed, it had hardly occurred to Wellington that Massena might not retire. "I am convinced," he wrote to Lord Liverpool, "there is no man in his senses who has ever passed a winter in Portugal, who would not recommend them to go, rather than endeavour to maintain themselves upon the Zezere for the winter, or than attack our position, whatever may be the strength of their reinforcements." Massena had never seen a Portuguese winter, but if he chose, great commander though he was, to play the part of a senseless man and attempt the impossible, Wellington could not help it. The great object of the British General was to gain a year of time. If the first flood of French soldiers from Austria were checked for twelve months, a breathing space would be won not only for Spain but for the rest of Europe. It was a matter of comparatively small

1810. importance to Wellington when Massena should retreat. The instant withdrawal of the French army might be desirable as furnishing a more dazzling close to the operations ; but, if it should come later instead of sooner, the moral effect would not be the less great, while the actual damage to the material resources of the enemy would be incomparably more serious.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the whole, therefore, the campaign was decidedly favourable to the British. Wellington had had his disappointments in the premature fall of Almeida and the failure to arrest Massena's progress at Bussaco ; but he had had also his consolations in the long initial delay of the Marshal's advance, his adversary's selection of the wrong road from Almeida to Coimbra, and the bloody repulse of the French columns in a general action. The first great English historian of the war has summed up Massena's mistakes, but he has added a definite assertion that his march was successful, and has pointed out the means by which he might have turned it to greater account. He suggests, for instance, that on the 30th of September the Marshal might, by a rapid advance to Leiria, have cut Wellington's communications with Lisbon ; and that, even after the Allies had gained Leiria and secured their retreat, "he might have established a fresh base at Coimbra, employed the Ninth Corps to seize Oporto, secured his line of communication with that city and Almeida by fortified posts, and afterwards, extending his position by the left, attacked Abrantes and given his hand to a corps sent by Soult from the south." Lastly, Napier dwells with emphasis upon the fact that the French carried and husbanded fourteen days' bread, thus rendering the army in great measure independent of commissariat-trains.

Taking the last point first, it is an undoubted fact

<sup>1</sup> The authorities for the last three paragraphs will be found in Wellington to Hill, 18th, 19th, 22nd, 24th, 26th Nov. ; to Liverpool, 21st, 24th Nov., 1st, 7th Dec. ; to General W. Stewart, 4th, 8th Dec. ; to Admiral Berkeley, 26th Nov. ; to Craufurd, 1st Dec. 1810.

that fourteen days' bread was served out to the French troops ; but it is equally certain that the weight broke the men down,<sup>1</sup> and that the majority of them treated the ration as do young soldiers of all nations—consumed as much as they could on the first day, and then threw away the rest. All calculations based upon this method of feeding the French army must therefore be dismissed as worthless ; and in dictating the movements which Massena should have made, we are, as usual, brought face to face with the old questions of transport and supply. It is easy to speak of bringing Drouet's corps to Oporto, but the question is whether it could have marched thither without starving. Drouet could hardly have made his way through Traz-os-Montes, so presumably he must have come by Ciudad Rodrigo, where Massena had complained, as long ago as in July, that neither horses nor carriage were obtainable. Moreover, the French military-waggons were, like the English, unfit for mountain roads.<sup>2</sup> British, Spaniards, and French had, in fact, been draining animals out of Northern Spain for two years, and the consumption and waste had been enormous. Again, a line of fortified posts to keep up communications with Almeida on one side and Oporto on the other would have meant the locking up of a vast number of men. The *ordenança* and armed peasantry were everywhere, and would have made the collection of victuals difficult if not impossible. Convoys could not have moved without large escorts ; and altogether Massena's field-army must have been dangerously weakened. In fact, it was the impossibility of maintaining a line of fortified posts on the road to Almeida, without disabling his force for active operations, which compelled Massena to abandon his communications altogether. Napier's criticism, therefore, is at least doubtful ; and it was evidently inserted for the glorification of his idol Napoleon.

<sup>1</sup> *Vie Militaire du Général Foy*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup> *Campagne de Portugal, 1810-11*, par A. D. L. G., p. 48.

1810. On the whole, the Marshal, in spite of all mistakes, really accomplished more than could reasonably have been expected from any man, situated as he was ; and Wellington deserves the more credit for the courage and constancy with which he confronted him. It is not sufficiently appreciated that the campaign of 1810 was a campaign of retreat, that is to say, of thanklessness, depression, and discouragement to regimental officers and to rank and file. For all that they knew, the operations were likely to close with a re-embarkation, that end which from the beginning of the war Pitt's mismanagement had made too common for British expeditions ; and not a few officers complained that they saw no great difference between walking away and running away. The last days of the long backward movement just before the army entered the lines were a time of great hardship, for the rain was incessant, and the clothing of many of the men in rags. Craufurd, indeed, reported that the Light Division was more miserably clad than any but the very lowest description of beggars.<sup>1</sup> Yet the army's moral force was never shaken, and the conduct of the British cavalry, in spite of some mistakes, was admirable ; for a mere handful of men never hesitated to charge, not once but repeatedly, greatly superior numbers of the enemy's horse.<sup>2</sup> There was, it is true, gross misconduct in some regiments on the line of march, notably among the Irish regiments of Picton's division ; but the mischief was checked and discipline restored by summary executions. To have guided a mixed host of British, Germans, and Portuguese back from Almeida to Bussaco and from thence to Torres Vedras, a distance of about

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Craufurd to Wellington, 19th Oct. 1810.

<sup>2</sup> Cotton to Wellington, 6th Oct. (*Wellington MSS.*), reports that on the evening of the 5th Oct. he charged two regiments of cavalry with one squadron of the Sixteenth L.D., and the picquets of the Royals, Fourteenth and Sixteenth L.D. The enemy came on again supported by five more regiments and a battery, and were charged eight times by the above force, strengthened by one squadron of the First Hussars, K.G.L., and two more squadrons of Sixteenth L.D.

two hundred and fifty miles, and to have brought it into the lines still a highly effective and spirited army, was in itself a feat that marked a great commander. It is easy to move troops forward: the final test of a general and of his soldiers is the power to move back.

Nor must it be forgotten that the military operations were not Wellington's only, nor even his greatest, difficulty. The members of the Portuguese Regency had marred his plans by refusing to lay bare the country south of Coimbra; and, when the Allied army approached the lines of Torres Vedras, the Patriarch and the Principal protested against the retreat of the Portuguese, and obstructed all measures of security so persistently that Stuart besought Wellington to remove them from Lisbon by some means and at any cost. Wellington answered in his usual trenchant style that either he or de Souza must leave the country, though he was prepared to allow the Patriarch to remain "as a necessary evil"; and finally he addressed a letter to Stuart, which was read by the envoy to the Regency, stating bluntly that unless the members mended their ways, he must believe that "they looked to a little dirty popularity instead of to save their country." Once again a plea must be put in for lenient judgment of these two Portuguese gentlemen who irritated Wellington so much. It was necessary that Portugal should suffer terribly for the cause of Europe; but they may be pardoned if they thought that too great sacrifices were demanded of their unfortunate country.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, Wellington still chafed under the thought that he did not possess the confidence of the British Government. Liverpool, on the 10th of September, had assured him that the Cabinet was cordially unanimous on the subject of prosecuting the war, and that the unwillingness of the House of Commons to vote supplies for it was due chiefly to the croaking of officers who had returned on leave. "The contest," he said, "could

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Stuart to Wellington, 5th, 26th, 29th Oct.; *Wellington Desp.* to Stuart, 6th, 25th, 26th, 28th Oct. 1810.

1810. never have been maintained in Portugal through the winter and spring if it had not been for the determination of Government to persevere in it at all risks to themselves, against not only the declared opinion of their opponents but the private remonstrances of many of their friends." "I shall be very desirous of hearing from you privately and fully," he wrote a month later, evidently in the hope of allaying Wellington's distrust. "I say *privately*, because you may rely upon not being committed by anything that you write in that manner." "I am anxious," he wrote yet again, "to assure you that we are most fully and completely satisfied with all that you have done and all that you are doing. With respect to the expediency of attacking Massena . . . we wish you to be governed entirely by your own discretion. . . . Stuart knows our objects to be the defence of Portugal and the support of the cause of the Peninsula, as long as they are practicable; and I trust you feel that you possess the confidence of Government with respect to the measures that it may be desirable to adopt for these purposes."<sup>1</sup>

The Minister's efforts to conciliate the General were useless. The Government in Wellington's opinion was weak in the House of Commons, and must therefore be subject to the vices of such weakness. "Depend upon it," he wrote to Mr. Arbuthnot, "that you have no legitimate majority in the House of Commons, and the occurrences of last session show how little dependence can be placed upon the casual support of one or other of the loose parties which are floating about." Wellington had not a word of approval for the dauntless courage and the remarkable ability with which Perceval had steered the ship of administration through a very stormy session, no sympathy with the Government's financial difficulties, though he knew them to be enormous. Perceval had warned him that England could make no more strenuous exertions than she was

<sup>1</sup> Liverpool to Wellington, 10th Sept., 17th Oct., 19th Nov., 1810; *Supp. Desp.* vi. 591, 618, 641.

making, and had assured him that Ministers were far 1810, from starving the great cause by any mistaken economy ; but Wellington turned a deaf ear. The slightest hint at a possible reduction of expense was ruthlessly distorted by him into niggardly withdrawal of supplies. Liverpool had proposed that if Wellington felt himself *quite* secure (emphasising the word *quite*) for the next six months, it would be desirable to make as large a saving as was feasible during that period under the head of transports. Wellington reported the circumstance to Charles Stuart in the following words: "It is useless to expect more money from England, as the desire of economy has overcome even the fears of Ministers, and they have gone so far as to desire me to send home the transports in order to save money!" One is led to wonder (for Wellington's papers throw no light upon the subject) whether there was some persistent mischief-maker in England, who neutralised all the loyal assurances of the Cabinet, and encouraged the General to torment himself, and to add to his own difficulties by nourishing an invincible distrust of his employers.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Ministers did not confine themselves to mere soothing words ; upon occasion they showed that they had not only a policy but a will of their own. Liverpool did his utmost to supply Wellington liberally both with men and money ; but he gave him clearly to understand that he would be no party to a revival of Pitt's system of great spasmodic endeavour, followed by two or three years of impotence. "We must make our option," wrote Liverpool at the close of one of his most conciliatory letters, "between a steady and continued exertion upon a moderate scale, and a great and extraordinary effort for a limited time, which neither our military nor financial means will enable us to maintain permanently. If it could be hoped that the latter

<sup>1</sup> Wellington to Arbuthnot, 5th Oct. (*Supp. Desp.* vi. 611) ; to Stuart, 22nd Dec. 1810. Napier has of course accepted Wellington's distortion of Liverpool's words from sheer violence of party hatred.



1810. would bring the contest to a speedy and successful conclusion, it would certainly be the wisest course ; but unfortunately the experience of the last fifteen years is not encouraging in this respect." This was sound sense, and a timely reminder that Wellington, in his constant demands for increased forces and increased subsidies, was really discrediting the "waiting game" which he had himself advocated, and was tending to revert to the false methods of Pitt. Let it not be reckoned to the fault of Wellington if, in the stress of anxiety and the overwhelming burden of work, he occasionally forgot that the war in the Peninsula was but a part of the task which occupied the attention of Ministers; and let it be counted to the praise rather than the blame of Ministers if at the right moment they asserted, with gentleness, indeed, but with firmness, that the supreme conduct of the great struggle lay not in his hands but in theirs.

And so let us leave Wellington and Massena face to face ; for, though the story of the operations in the West Indies and in the Mediterranean has already been told, we have not yet exhausted our survey of the British armies in the field during 1810.

## CHAPTER XL

OUR last narrative of events in India ended with the close of the Mahratta War in December 1805, and with the accession of Sir George Barlow to the Governorship-General. The appointment, first of Cornwallis and then of this gentleman to succeed him for a time, marked one of those reactions in which the Directors of the East India Company faithfully represented the feeling of commonplace Englishmen. Lord Wellesley had made it his governing principle that British power and influence must be paramount in India, and he had done his best to enforce it. The Directors, thinking chiefly of dividends, denounced such a policy as ruinous; Cornwallis had shrunk from it as embarrassing; Barlow abjured it as an accursed thing. There could be no doubt but that Wellesley's energetic interference in the affairs of his neighbours had involved India in financial difficulties, and that a reduction of expenditure was in itself desirable; but with Barlow economy was almost a mania. He was a man who formulated theories and acted upon them with invincible courage, but he had no knowledge of the world nor of men. It was useless to represent to him that Rajpootana, which Wellesley had saved from destruction by the Mahrattas, was still at the mercy of predatory bands, acting not without encouragement from Scindia, and that Central India was consequently in a dangerous state of unrest. The East India Company in his view had no concern with the Rajpoots. It was futile to point out that the wholesale and rapid disbandment of troops threw penniless upon the world a mass of men,

1806. accustomed to live by the sword, a fact which must surely raise up trouble in the near future. It was enough for Barlow that disbanded soldiers for the present cost nothing; and he left the future to take care of itself. For the rest, he was a man of repellent manners and unconciliatory, address which, added to extreme tenacity of his own opinion, led him into innumerable quarrels. He claimed that he was guided always by principle; and, so far as narrowness of view and rigidity of action are concerned, he was justified in the claim; but it should seem that he held himself absolved by these lofty professions from the obligation to treat either opponents with fairness, or any description of men with common sense. In one respect, however, he outshone the vast majority of Englishmen, namely, in courage and strength of will; and it was these fine qualities, underlying a superstructure of littleness, which made him mistake resolute stupidity for firm administration.

His reign as Governor-General was fortunately short, for, albeit nominated as of right by the Directors, he was superseded owing to the pressure of the Imperial Government by Lord Minto, who arrived at Calcutta 1807. at the end of July 1807. Of this gentleman, whom we have already known in Corsica as Gilbert Elliot, it must suffice to say that he was a sentimental Whig, unalterably devoted to the British Constitution and to the glorious Revolution of 1688. Despite, however, of the doctrine of non-interference which had been preached to him by the Directors, and which had been carried to extravagant lengths by Barlow, Lord Minto refused to allow anarchy to prevail unchecked among his neighbours; and he intervened effectively not only to put down predatory leaders both in Bundelcund and Berar, but even to constrain the formidable Runjeet Sing by threat of arms, when he presumed to cross the Sutlej on a career of conquest. In another very serious crisis, however, which called for high qualities of insight and administration, Lord Minto, as shall be seen, was found wanting.

To indemnify Sir George Barlow for the loss of the <sup>1807.</sup> chief place in India, he was appointed to be Governor of Madras, and took up the duties of his office in December 1807. In the isolation which the several presidencies in those days affected, his advent as a stranger from Bengal was not welcome ; while his zeal for economy, even where it might be most laudable and right, naturally did not commend him to the many who were likely to lose by it. Barlow began by suspending without trial a civil servant who was charged with speculation, with the result that, upon the acquittal of the accused by the Supreme Court, the Board of Directors were obliged to pay him a large sum in compensation. Sir George continued by punishing, again without trial, two civil servants who had committed a native to custody for fraud ; and was for the second time proved to be in the wrong by the conviction of the native before the Supreme Court of a long course of systematic forgery. Having thus caused general irritation by a display of arbitrary temper, Barlow next turned to the reduction of expenditure in the army.

Now it must be premised that the armies of all three Presidencies, and the army of Madras in particular, were in no very good state. The officers were, generally speaking, superior in intelligence and education to those of the King's Army ; and this was not unnatural, for they had more interesting duties, greater responsibility, and infinitely better chances of rising in their world. It was upon their knowledge of native languages and their influence with native soldiers that British rule in India depended, and, knowing this, they could not fail also to know their own importance. They thus acquired a sense of their dignity, which was enhanced by their many opportunities, legitimate and otherwise, for enriching themselves. Political and diplomatic missions of the greatest gravity were entrusted then, even more often than now, to military officers, and carried with them enormous power and great emoluments ; while services of a less ambitious

1807. kind often served to gain the favour, which took a substantial form, of native magnates. But in compensation for exile under the Eastern sun they did expect at all times to make money. The traditions of Clive, Admiral Hughes, and others who had returned home rich, and had been execrated in England as "nabobs," were not yet extinct ; and every man in India counted upon amassing a fortune for himself.

Nor was this altogether unreasonable ; for were they not servants of a commercial company which had rewarded the deeds of such men as Lord Wellesley and his brother Arthur with studied neglect ? It was true that in rare cases servants of the Company, as such, had received red ribands and even peerages, but as a rule the only recompense that their masters could confer on them was money. Hence, whereas the King's officers regarded the performance of military duty as an end that was honourable in itself, the Company's officers treated it as a burden worth bearing only for the attainment of their ultimate object, wealth and its advantages. But the Company's officers must not be judged harshly ; for they could not but be alive to the inferiority of their position. They were not of the sacred band who wore the King's uniform and fought under the King's colours ; who could receive His Majesty's thanks for their conduct in the field ; who, after good service done, could attend the levee of the Commander-in-Chief and hear from the mouth of the King's son—possibly from the lips of the King himself—that they had deserved well of their Sovereign and of their country. They could not look up through rank after rank of the great military hierarchy, and feel that the highest chief of all was proud to wear the same red coat as themselves. They could but look to the Directors, and then only for profit and applause ; for who could derive honour from merchants in Leadenhall Street ?

The result was that there had grown up among the officers of the Presidential armies a practice of expressing corporate approbation of each other's merits and services

by means of votes and addresses. "If an officer," wrote 1807. Thomas Maitland from Ceylon, "does his duty in the field, he is 'addressed' by his subordinates. The common execution of his duty approved by his commanding officer goes for nothing; the officers under him must state their opinion of his merits from end to end of India. There is nothing but addresses and answers on the most trivial occasions." We have seen something of the same spirit in the British Army when Sir Arthur Wellesley's officers, perceiving that he was slighted by Sir Hew Dalrymple, sent him flattering letters and a piece of plate; but in India it is evident that such occurrences were not only ludicrously but dangerously frequent. For it is obvious that if officers are allowed to signify approval of the merits of a superior, they have an equal right to criticise and even to censure his shortcomings. The whole system was in fact utterly subversive of discipline.

The subordination of the officers was further injured by the fact that they knew not to whom to look for advancement. The provinces of the civil and military authorities had never been accurately defined, and there had for a long time been disputes between the two, occasionally culminating, as in the case of Lord Pigot, in actual violence. The chief cause of quarrel between them was competition for pecuniary patronage. The Commander-in-Chief, having a seat on the Council, thought himself entitled to a voice in the distribution of civil appointments; the civilian element, being in the ultimate resort supreme, claimed a share in the nomination to military posts. The contention over military patronage in particular often grew so sharp that questions were referred to England for decision, and were there generally determined, according to the spirit of the British constitution, in favour of the civilian. This only made the Commander-in-Chief the more anxious to indemnify himself by interference with civil patronage, and the civilians the more eager to defend their right against encroachment. The struggle

1807. between the two was often decided by the personal characteristics of the chief actors. If the Commander-in-Chief were the stronger man, he usurped the Governor's place ; if the converse were the case, the Governor arrogated the powers of the Commander-in-Chief. Not unfrequently differences were settled by a compromise, with the result that both patrons were indeed satisfied, but that the patronage was wrongly conferred, with much damage to the public service. The greatest evil of all was that officers, instead of looking to their legitimate chief for support, made interest with the party which for the time being was preponderant in the Council, whereby there was generated a spirit of intrigue most noxious to military subordination.
1808. Thus the discipline of the Madras army had been steadily corrupted ; and, to add to this evil, there was already among the officers a general feeling of discontent. The principal causes of this feeling were two. In the first place, some particular allowances granted to officers of a certain standing were lower in Madras than in Bengal ; and, although the authorities might claim that there was no valid reason for the equalisation of allowances in the various presidencies, nevertheless the fact remained that such equalisation had been recommended not only by a previous Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Madras, but by Lord Cornwallis himself. Here, therefore, was a grievance which might be called legitimate, though its continuance was due to the Court of Directors and in no way to Barlow. A second measure, which caused great dissatisfaction, was the abolition of an allowance, called the Tent-allowance, which was granted to commanding officers of regiments in 1802, and which made it obligatory upon them to provide camp-equipage, transport, and hutting accommodation for their men whether in peace or war. This change was suggested before Barlow's arrival, of course in the interests of economy ; and there was very much to be said in its favour, for undoubtedly officers looked upon the allowance as a means of making money. But on the

other hand, like the clothing-allowance of colonels in 1808. the British Army, it might prove to be a source of heavy expense instead of gain to the recipients ; for, while the sum granted was more than enough in time of peace, it might very well be found inadequate during a long war. As it chanced, also, the original regulation had hardly been made before the Madras Army had been plunged into the lengthy and exhausting war with the Mahrattas ; wherefore the colonels looked for the enjoyment of the allowance during a few years of peace in order to recoup themselves for money actually out of pocket owing to the cost of the campaigns. Moreover, as a saving, the abolition of the allowance was unimportant, for the Madras Army was incessantly employed in petty expeditions, and must therefore be provided in some way with transport and camp-equipage. Barlow, however, not only swept away the allowance, but contrived to do it in a fashion which made the reform as unpalatable as possible. The fact was that he hated soldiers, and appears to have made no secret of his satisfaction in mortifying them.

A third and really substantial grievance was the bestowal upon King's officers instead of upon Company's officers of a great many of the most lucrative places on the staff. This was not the work of Barlow but of Lord William Bentinck and Sir John Cradock, both of them of the King's army, Bentinck in particular having the true Whig passion for a job. The Court of Directors admitted and censured the injustice of these appointments ; and, whether to put a stop to the practice or for some better reason, they decided that in future the Commander-in-Chief should not have a seat on the Council. Cradock was succeeded in September 1807 by General Macdowall. This officer we have already seen commanding in Ceylon, and have characterised as not the wisest of men ; but he can hardly be blamed if he resented his exclusion from a place which had been enjoyed by all of his predecessors, to the prejudice alike of his dignity and of his emoluments. Being a King's



1808. officer, he was not naturally in sympathy with the Company's army ; but his grievance inspired him with fellow-feeling for all other sufferers of his profession, and it will presently be seen that he did not fail to give it utterance.

The general discontent was becoming acute at the end of 1808, when a disturbance in Travancore suddenly called for the services of an armed force. The Rajah had fallen in arrear with the payment of his subsidy ; and his chief Minister, who was responsible for his recalcitrance, had been dismissed upon the demand of the British resident. To revenge himself he organised an insurrection for the murder of that gentleman, and induced the Rajah of Cochin to join in it. The trouble was so far serious that Barlow applied even to Maitland in Ceylon for help ; and the rising was not put down without the employment of the whole or parts of four of the King's regiments,<sup>1</sup> and of twelve native battalions ; but, thanks to the energy of the commanders of the various columns, all resistance was overcome by the end of February 1809. The severest day's fighting cost more than one hundred and forty casualties, and Sir George Barlow and his Council did not fail to tender public thanks to the principal officers concerned.

Such an incident should have helped to improve the relations between the army and the Madras Government ; but unfortunately the breach between the two had already been widened by a series of foolish actions upon both sides. The report upon which the Government had decided to abolish the tent-allowance had been drawn up by the Quartermaster-general, Lieutenant-colonel Munro of the Company's service, and had been, of course, of a confidential nature. In the course of that report Munro had said quite legitimately that "the grant of the same allowances in peace and war placed the interests and duties of commanding officers at variance with each other" ; and either by accident or through mischief a copy of the document was circulated

<sup>1</sup> Twelfth, Nineteenth, Sixty-ninth, Eightieth.

to all the commanding officers in the Madras Presidency. 1809. Thereupon, twenty-eight of them preferred against Munro a charge of injuring their character by infamous accusations, and demanded his trial by court-martial.

The matter was, however, kept in abeyance for three months, and might well have come to nothing but for tactlessness and folly in another quarter. An officer being required for special duty in Travancore, the civil government selected Major Blacker, the Deputy Quartermaster-general, and on the 15th of January informed Macdowall of the fact. Macdowall begged that the subject might be reconsidered, saying, very reasonably, that the choice of an officer for the general staff ought to have been left to the Commander-in-Chief, and recommending another officer, of equal ability and greater knowledge of Travancore, for the post. The Governor declined to accept his nomination; and Macdowall then took the childish step of arresting Munro upon the accusation of the officers above mentioned, apparently with the idea that, if the Quartermaster-general were disabled from employment, his deputy could not go to Travancore. Munro appealed to the Government through the Military Department for his release, pleading justly that his report had been prepared in obedience to orders; and Macdowall very wrongly declined to forward the appeal, with the natural result that Munro then addressed the Government direct. The Government thereupon requested Macdowall to release the arrested officer; but this the General declined to do without a positive command. He had already announced his intention to resign and to sail for England; and on the 25th of January, the day after Munro's release, he vented his vexation in a general order, wherein he publicly reprimanded that officer for seeking the protection of the civil power, and added that, but for his own departure from India, he would have tried him by court-martial. Thereupon the Governor and Council, without waiting for Macdowall's resignation, publicly

1809. dismissed him from his post for conduct which they truly described as "grossly derogatory to the character of the Government, and subversive of military discipline."

So far there was nothing that could be censured in Barlow's conduct. It was indeed quite unnecessary to irritate the Commander-in-Chief by giving orders to his staff-officer without consulting him, but it was not beyond the legitimate powers of the Governor; and dismissal was no excessive punishment for Macdowall's insubordinate manifesto. Now, however, Barlow put himself in the wrong by suspending Major Boles, the Deputy Adjutant-general, for countersigning Macdowall's general order above mentioned, upon the ground that Boles knew such signature to be a direct violation of his duty to the Government. Moreover, Major-general Gowdie, who had succeeded Macdowall as next senior, caused Boles to be informed that, if he expressed regret for what he had done, he should be reinstated. Boles very rightly refused to do anything of the kind. He had signed the obnoxious document by order of his senior officer, and was not responsible for it. Obviously, if every officer on the staff were to judge for himself whether the orders of his chief were or were not in accordance with that chief's duty to the Government before he executed them, there would be an end of all military discipline. Barlow had rightly upheld the principle that subordinates were not answerable for acts committed by a superior's command, when he protected Munro against persecution for drawing up his report upon the tent-allowance. Yet, now, he stultified himself and outraged that same principle by persecuting Boles for the sins of Macdowall. More than this, he aggravated his criminal folly by repeating it. Colonel Capper, who had been temporarily absent from his office, represented that he, rather than Boles, was, as chief staff-officer, responsible for the circulation of the order, whereupon Barlow suspended him likewise from his appointment. Yet these two were

acknowledged to be the best officers in the Madras Army. 1809.

But the Governor did not stop here. Macdowall and Capper both sailed for England on the 30th of January; and Boles, being impoverished by the loss of his allowances, purposed to follow them at the end of February in the last ship of the season. Barlow, however, upon a trivial pretext, refused him permission to take his passage in this ship, having already arranged to send the Chief Secretary of the Government to England in order to lay his version of the whole matter first before the Court of Directors. This was mean, cowardly, and unjust; and, indeed, the Court later on went so far as to condemn the prohibition of Boles's departure from India as an unnecessary hardship to that officer. Macdowall and Capper shortly afterwards passed beyond reach alike of Barlow's vindictiveness and of the Company's censure, for their ship was lost at sea, and both of them perished.

The next proceeding of the Government of Madras was to report the entire affair to the Governor-General, forwarding at the same time a memorial from the officers to the Court of Directors on the question of the equalisation of the allowances. This memorial the Government had declined to receive; and Lord Minto approved of their decision, declaring that the tenor of the document was disrespectful. The Supreme Government likewise applauded every one of Barlow's proceedings, and encouraged him to persevere in his repression of the insubordinate spirit in the army, with promise of full support from Calcutta. In the main Lord Minto was undoubtedly right. Macdowall's conduct had been indefensible, and the officers generally needed to be reduced to obedience. But the suspension of Boles and Capper was a matter which should not have been passed over; and the Governor-General's treatment of this incident was singularly inept. He confessed that "he had heard of that most unfortunate and impolitic measure with the greatest possible regret,"

1809. and foresaw the consequences which would flow from it ; but he abstained from reversing it, partly because he did not wish to put Sir George in the wrong on any point, and partly because he thought the suspension "justifiable in a legal point of view." Upon this it may be observed, first, that Sir Thomas Maitland, sternest of disciplinarians, and all sober-thinking men were of opinion that the suspension was illegal ; and, secondly, that if Barlow had been wrong, the support of the Governor-General certainly could not make him right. To any practical statesman the suspension of the Commander-in-Chief and of most of his staff would have signified that the trouble was one which required the immediate presence and personal intervention of the supreme head of India. But, instead of sailing at once to Madras, Lord Minto wrote a despatch which encouraged the officers on the one side to question the commands of their superiors, and stimulated Barlow on the other side to repress their insubordinate spirit. Such a method was admirably calculated to spur both parties to interminable conflict.

As a matter of fact, the officers required no quickening to mischief, Barlow's behaviour to Boles and Capper having exasperated them as a body to the bitterest individual hatred of Sir George the man. The latter, in fact, spared no pains to keep them in a constant state of irritation. To use Sir Thomas Maitland's words : "The commonest forms of military duty were turned into punishments. If a regiment was marched away, it was said to be a punishment for the misconduct of an officer. If any expression was dropped at mess, the officer was removed from his battalion or situation." The malcontents, therefore, began by sending to Boles addresses of sympathy, with assurances that a fund would be organised for his maintenance ; they denounced his punishment as severe and unmerited ; and they ended by saying that such mutual support and encouragement must be expected and welcomed by all

others who, like himself, might suffer from the exceptionable measures of the Government. All this, though not in the circumstances unnatural, was as wrong as it could be; but the officers did not stop there. Early in February they prepared a secret Feb. memorial to the Governor-General in Council, complaining of the exclusion of the Commander-in-Chief from the Council of Madras, of the release of Munro from arrest, and of the suspension of Capper and Boles. This memorial deprecated any misinterpretation of their discontent as disaffection, talked of the "violation of the exclusive rights of the army," and, finally, besought the Supreme Government to "release them from a ruler whose measures, guided by the councils of their implacable enemies, are equally detrimental to the interests of the State as they are repulsive to the feelings of a loyal and patriotic army."

The pompous and inflated style of this document shows that literary vanity had blinded the writers to the hollowness of the sophism, that loyalty to the Company at large could be compatible with disloyalty to its government on the spot. The petitioners, however, after brief reflection decided that they had gone too far. The paper, indeed, was hardly circulated beyond Travancore and the extreme south of the Presidency; and by the middle of March the agitation had subsided, March. and all idea of presenting the memorial had been abandoned. A little tact and common sense might well have ended the quarrel at this point; and a little consideration, combined with a great deal of firmness, would probably have alienated the body of the malcontents from the few really troublesome officers, and begun the restoration of discipline.

But such were not the methods of Barlow. He had obtained a copy of the memorial from a source which he declined to reveal; and, though fully aware that all intention of handing it in had been given up, he on the 1st of May issued a general order May 1. suspending or dismissing fourteen officers, all of whom

1809. held high command, while many had just earned the Government's thanks for their conduct in Travancore. Not one was apprised of the crime that he had committed ; not one was permitted to say a word in his own defence. Some of them denied, possibly with untruth, that they knew anything about the document. One of them, a most respectable officer, brought the testimony of twenty-nine brother-officers to prove that he had had nothing whatever to do with the matter. It was useless. The whole of them were punished upon private information, without trial and without hope of redress. Moreover, this procedure was and is perfectly legal. A British officer has no right to claim either court-martial or court of inquiry : in a word, there is no justice for him. But though isolated individuals must and do bear with this rule in silence, its application to a number of officers at one time is no ill-chosen method of driving them and their comrades to mutiny.

Some time was needed for the news of the General Order of the 1st of May to spread to all the cantonments in the south, so that no immediate effect followed upon it. The agitation among the officers was, moreover, in many respects a remarkable one. Committees of correspondence had been formed in all the important military stations ; but there were no leaders. Barlow and his Council insisted that the discontent was due to a few mischievous men ; but these men could not be named, and therefore could not be arrested. The Governor probably thought that he had selected them in his General Order, but he was absolutely mistaken. The movement was universal, and carried with it spontaneously every officer in the service, old and young, field-officer and subaltern—a very significant fact, which Barlow, either through blindness or from sheer falsehood, omitted to represent to the Governor-General. There can be no question but that the officers looked to Lord Minto to act as mediator between them and the man whom they regarded, not wholly without reason in spite of their culpable insubordination, as

their oppressor. With singular fatuity Minto carefully <sup>1809.</sup> debarred himself from playing this honourable part. Barlow had, of course, forwarded to him the mutinous memorial, of which he had surreptitiously obtained a copy; and in a despatch of the 27th of May <sup>May 27.</sup> the Governor-General delivered his judgment upon the whole matter. A document more absurd, and more typical of the sentimental Whig, was never penned, being, in fact, neither more nor less than a long, prosing, pedantic treatise<sup>1</sup> upon the relations of the Army with the State, all leading up to justification and support of every act of Barlow's government, and containing very doubtful and dangerous doctrine.

First, Lord Minto dwelt at length upon the danger of an army's becoming a deliberative body—a peril which no one doubted—and laid down, rightly enough, the rule that passive obedience is the duty of a soldier. Then, passing to the case of Major Boles, he declared with perfect correctness that the treatment of that officer, whatever it had been, was not the affair of the army. But, leaving this strong ground, he next discovered that passive obedience to a criminal order was not the duty of a soldier. Herein he took it upon himself to supersede the Articles of War, which enacted that a soldier was justified in disobeying an illegal order—not at all the same thing as a criminal one; and, in fact, he substituted for a rule which was more or less clear and definite, another which was both vague and indefinable. Moreover, by leaving it to the judgment of military men to decide whether an order were criminal or otherwise, he gave an opening to the army to become a deliberative body, which was the very thing that he had just condemned. All this he had done already by implication in his original approval of every action of Barlow; but he now promulgated his ridiculous doctrine in 'black and white, so that every disaffected officer could appeal to the Governor-General's dictum in support of his action.

<sup>1</sup> I reckon its length at nearly 10,000 words.



1809. Turning then to the cause of all the trouble, Lord Minto rightly traced it to the abolition of the tent-allowance. But, as this would have conceded the point that there might be a reason, albeit a bad one, for general discontent in the army, and as the authorities were unwilling upon any account to admit that the mutinous spirit pervaded the whole body of the officers, Lord Minto seized the opportunity to visit all blame upon the head of Macdowall. That General had, he averred, been guilty of sowing sedition in the army. Now Macdowall had beyond doubt acted foolishly and wrongly; but to attach to his deeds intentions which were not borne out by substantive facts, and indeed were practically contradicted by Macdowall's resignation of his command, was both cruel and cowardly. And there was calculation in this cowardice. The people of England would have found it comforting to believe that the trouble in Madras was due to the folly and crime of one man, rather than to the revolt of the whole body of the East India Company's officers. The knowledge of such a revolt would have led the public to suspect with justice that there must have been gross mismanagement in high places; and Barlow was therefore naturally anxious to lead it off on a false scent. Upon the whole matter it is impossible to condemn Lord Minto's attitude too strongly. Had he come at once to Madras and taken the whole affair into his own hands, the agitation would have subsided instantly. Instead of this he promulgated, as an *eirenicon*, a tedious pamphlet, which, from its portentous literary vanity, its sophistical arguments, its blindness to facts, and its resolute defence of the wrong, was calculated to destroy all confidence alike in his good sense and in his impartiality.

The first overt act of defiance came from the officers May 7. in garrison at Masulipatam. On the 7th of May, upon the arrival of a new commanding officer, Colonel Innes, for the Madras European Regiment,<sup>1</sup> two foolish young

<sup>1</sup> The Hundred and Second.

subalterns proposed as a toast "The Friends of the 1809. Army," with preliminary speeches reflecting upon the late proceedings of Government. Innes gave the hot heads a hint which ought to have checked this unseemly display ; but it was not taken ; and, knowing that the regiment was in bad order, he reported the circumstance to the Government semi-officially, begging that the matter might not for the present be noticed, as he hoped to bring the officers to a sense of their duty without severity. This counsel was far too wise to weigh with Barlow and his advisers, who promptly removed one of the two offenders, Lieutenant Maitland, from his post of Quartermaster, and sent the other to an unhealthy outlying station, far away from his regiment, with orders not to leave it until sickness should compel him. At the same time a letter from the Government intimated that a repetition of such conduct would "involve the whole corps of the Madras European Regiment in the severest penalties." These words startled all ranks of the regiment into belief that it was about to be disbanded ; and a deputation of the officers waited upon Innes to ask him for a copy of the information which he had furnished to Barlow. "We have the right," they said, "to ask whether the Madras Government has the power to inflict such a punishment upon the report of a single individual, without a fair trial." Innes, of course, refused to comply ; and the officers then, on the 27th May 27. of May, addressed the same question to the Adjutant-general, and again properly received no answer. Their behaviour had been shameful, and their clamour as to their rights was preposterous. A British military officer, it must be repeated, has no right either to trial or to justice ; that privilege is reserved for non-commissioned officers, privates, and civilians.

Soon afterwards, orders came for a party of the Madras Europeans to be embarked on board two men-of-war as marines, the naval Commander-in-Chief being in want of a supplement for his crews. Such service was extremely distasteful to all ranks ; and indeed the

1809. instruction to embark the men against their own wish was of doubtful legality. Moreover, it was pretty evident that the work on board ship was intended to be penal, inasmuch as the officer appointed to command the party was Lieutenant Maitland. The officers therefore decided that they would not obey in this matter; and, when the vessels came in, they asked Innes to suspend the order for embarkation until they had received an answer from the Governor and Council to a memorial begging for redress of their grievances. Innes sharply declined, and threatened to enforce obedience by landing a naval brigade; whereupon the officers called the Europeans and the Nineteenth Native Infantry to arms, and placed Innes in close arrest under custody of four European sentries. "The Government's unjust treatment," they said, "the rumours of disbandment, and the order to embark as marines have determined us to resist such dangerous acts until a fair investigation has been held. This is not the first time that the Government has punished the most capable officers without trial. At the same time we are still the supporters of the British interests in India, and loyal subjects of the King."

Here, therefore, was open and audacious mutiny, and that not only of a native but of an European regiment, whose men might be expected to follow their officers. The Government met the danger by appointing Lieutenant-colonel John Malcolm to take command of the Madras Europeans, and nominating a committee of three officers to inquire and report upon the matter. The committee, however, reduced itself, by reason of the sickness of his colleagues, to the solitary person of Malcolm, who set out at once for Masulipatam, and July 4. arrived there on the 4th of July. The officers had fully made up their minds to march towards Hyderabad and join the garrison of that place; but, overcome by the genial personality of Malcolm, they met him frankly, and, so to speak, placed their cards upon the table. He perused the papers which they laid before

him, and, reporting to Barlow that the movement in the 1809. army was general, and not partial, urged the necessity for making concessions. Barlow, always rigid and unreasonable, persisted in his opinion that the agitation was only partial, and disapproved Malcolm's conciliatory attitude. He empowered the Colonel to assure the Madras Europeans that there was no intention of disbanding them ; but, far from authorising him to negotiate with the officers, allowed him at his discretion to offer a pardon to the non-commissioned officers and men only. Malcolm, however, declined to take advantage of this permission for fear of driving the officers to despair ; and a few days later he returned to Madras to confer personally with Barlow. It may be added that Sir George and his Council, after due consideration, finally condemned Malcolm's policy, and attributed his failure to re-establish efficient control at Masulipatam to his "unreasonable forbearance."

Such being the attitude of Barlow and his advisers, it is not surprising that on the 15th of July they wrote July 15. to Sir Thomas Maitland at Ceylon to send to Madras immediately all the troops that could be spared from his garrison, having, as they said, no doubt of the intention of the officers to subvert the Government. This was a grim comment on their own statement that the insurrection was not general but partial. At the same time they committed themselves definitely to the policy of alienating the Sepoys from their officers, and obtained for it the support of the Governor-General, who, in a proclamation of the 20th of July, offered July 20. pardon to non-commissioned officers and men only, upon submission. Lastly, they devised a cunning instrument for driving as many officers as possible to at least a semblance of insubordination. A "test" or declaration was framed, whereby the signatories bound themselves to obey the orders and uphold the authority of the Government of Madras, agreeably to the tenor of their commissions ; and this was circulated to the commanding officers of stations, with instructions that all who

1809. declined to sign it should cease to do duty, and withdraw to the coast between Sadras and Negapatam, where they should remain, receiving their ordinary allowances until they could be re-employed. It may be observed that the legality of this last measure was extremely doubtful, while its expediency was more doubtful still. Sir Thomas Maitland wrote plainly to Castlereagh,<sup>1</sup> that if the test had been tendered to him by any delegated authority he should have refused to sign it. "Soldiers," he said, "are bound as much by the code of honour as by codes of rules and laws. To force such a pledge on a man is an imputation on his honour. It was a sure means of confounding the innocent with the guilty, for any honourable man would refuse to sign it." It may be added that to send agents to seduce soldiers from their officers, or, in other words, to presume the disloyalty of the officers, and to demand from them, under penalties, a pledge of loyalty afterwards, was neither logical, sensible, nor straightforward.

Barlow, however, troubled himself little about such refinements. The test was offered first to the General Staff at Madras, who signed it; next to the officers of the regiments at Fort St. George, most of whom rejected it; and then to those of the field-force encamped near the city, who almost to a man refused to subscribe it. The whole of the recalcitrants were despatched to the coast, some of them in circumstances of great hardship and degradation, owing to the severity of a King's officer who was placed in charge of them. These last expressed themselves as much hurt that the fidelity of some among them, who had served for thirty years, should be called in question; and they avowed that the ground of their refusal to sign the test was a conviction that it would militate against the interests of their service. At Vellore not an officer would sign. At Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Dindigul, and Palamcottah several officers accepted the test, but even more declined it, and these last were at once sent to the coast by Colonel Wilkinson

<sup>1</sup> C.O., Ceylon. Maitland to Castlereagh, 1st Oct. 1809.

of the King's Thirtieth Foot. In Travancore and the 1809. stations on the coast east and west of Cape Comorin the case was the same. Altogether, out of thirteen hundred officers, little more than one-tenth consented to sign the declaration ; this minority, however, including the ablest men in the army ; and the chief effect of the measure was to goad the malcontents to desperation.

Though the organisation of the mutineers (for such they must be termed) was so defective as hardly to merit the name, yet its centre lay at Hyderabad ; and it will be convenient first to follow the course of events there. The first outward symptom of mutiny was an intimation from the officers to the commandant, Colonel Montresor, on the 17th of July, that they would not July 17. permit a native battalion, which he had ordered to march to Goa, to proceed on its way. Four days later they presented Montresor with what they termed an ultimatum, wherein they set forth five specific demands : first, for the repeal of the General Order of the 1st of May ; second, for the restoration of every officer who had been suspended or removed ; third, for the trial of Colonel Innes for his conduct at Masulipatam ; fourth, for the removal of every officer of the general staff supposed to have influenced the Government in its late measures ; and fifth, for a general amnesty. It is unnecessary to comment upon the extreme of insubordination manifested in this document ; and yet it must be pointed out that the third demand alone was really of unreasonable insolence. The fourth, on the testimony of Sir Thomas Maitland, was not without justification. "I apprehend," he wrote to Castlereagh, "that Sir George Barlow's military advisers are men whose characters are not generally respected ; and, if I could enter into detail, I think there is great room for considerable censure." Lastly, the first, second, and fifth articles of the "ultimatum" were simply parts of a single protest against arbitrary punishment without accusation and without trial.

Upon receipt of this document the Madras Govern-

1809. ment decided to appoint Colonel Barry Close, an officer of rare ability and great influence in the army, and at that time resident in Poonah, to take command at Aug. 3. Hyderabad. On approaching the city on the 3rd of August he was met by Colonel Montresor and the officer commanding the King's Thirty-third Regiment, who, as loyal servants of the Government, warned him that the Company's officers would not allow him to take up his post until their memorial had been answered. Close, a strong and fearless man, declined to listen to their fears, and was for calling out the Thirty-third to overawe the malcontents; but being told that in this case the regiment would certainly be attacked by the mutinous battalions, he desisted. A deputation from the insubordinate officers then approached him; but he declined to hear them, and rode straight into camp, where the entire force was forming on parade. Halting there before the Sixteenth Native Infantry, he summoned the field-officers of the Hyderabad force to come to him. Only two obeyed, and to them he produced the "test," requiring the signature of all officers to it, and expatiating earnestly on the awful consequences of mutiny. His auditors were much impressed by his language, but asked time for consideration. Close peremptorily refused; and, riding up to the cavalry, he first called upon the sowars in their own language to abandon their officers. He then summoned the native officers of the infantry to come to him; but the British officers would not permit them to advance, whereupon he shouted to them also the same appeal which he had made to the troopers. Great confusion ensued, but the mutinous party prevailed. They ordered the men to prime and load, which order was obeyed; and finally they gave the command for the battalion to march off. Close tried in vain to stop them, appealing to the Native Cavalry for help, and shaking hands with the native officers, but to no purpose. His attempt to seduce the men from their leaders had failed; and, a company of artillery having come on to

the ground, Close dismounted and surrendered to the senior officer, who declined to take charge of him. Some altercation ensued, after which Close quitted the parade ; but it should seem that a few hours later the field-officers waited upon him to beg his mediation on their behalf, and to express their readiness to agree to anything that might be approved by himself and Malcolm.<sup>1</sup> Close, however, must have been obdurate, for on the morrow he received an intimation from the officers that he must leave the cantonments in the course of the day. Accordingly he returned to Poonah.

A few days later the mutineers, with many expressions of respect for Montresor's conduct and character, requested him to resign his command, since, in consequence of the harsh treatment of their comrades at Madras, they intended to withdraw the troops from Hyderabad and to encamp in the neighbourhood. Montresor thereupon remonstrated once more very solemnly with the senior officers ; and his representations deepened the impression made by those of Close. It was now known that the Governor-General was expected shortly to arrive at Madras ; and to him accordingly on the 11th of August the disaffected officers addressed a letter, stating that, relying on his justice, clemency, and wisdom, they would abide by his decision whatever it might be, and in token of their good faith had signed the test. They added that, had Close's presentation of the document been less sudden, his mission would not have been a failure. It must be noticed that they made their surrender to Lord Minto, not to Barlow, and as the result of friendly counsel, not of violence. From this it is clear that, if the Government had attempted to come to an explanation with the officers instead of treating them as stocks and stones, the entire agitation could have been quelled without difficulty.

The surrender of the mutineers at Hyderabad had an immediate effect upon the remainder of the army. The

<sup>1</sup> Such is Malcolm's account, enclosed in Maitland to Castle-reagh, 1st Oct. 1809.



1809. brigade at Jalna had marched on the 13th of August  
Aug. 13. after issuing a manifesto to the effect that, but for the uncompromising attitude of the Government of Madras, they would have awaited the arrival of Lord Minto; but on hearing the news from Hyderabad they marched back and signed the test. At Masulipatam Major-general Pater, who had succeeded Malcolm in command, withheld the test until the 9th of August, when he produced it on parade, and at the same time offered a pardon to all except the European officers. The men, both native and European, were clamorous that they would accept no pardon which was not extended to their superiors; but there were divisions among the leaders themselves; the men naturally became divided  
Aug. 15. also, and on the night of the 15th there was a serious affray between the two parties. The officers promptly interposed to quell the disturbance; and then, realising the consequences of their conduct, and being, moreover, apprised of what had happened at Hyderabad, they consented on the 16th to sign the test. The men of the Hundred and Second, thereupon, suspecting that they were to be sacrificed to the safety of their superiors, turned out with their arms and threatened to shoot any officer who should sign. In alarm Pater promised a general pardon to all ranks; but many of the men, being still suspicious, insisted upon proceeding to Madras. Finally, with Pater's permission, the officers ordered the entire regiment to march, and it moved off accordingly on the  
Aug. 17. evening of the 17th in military array. The mass of the privates was persuaded to return on the morrow, but over one hundred and fifty pursued their way under command of their own officers. Thus order was restored at Masulipatam.

The surrender of the mutineers in this place reacted likewise upon the neighbouring garrisons. A battalion at Samulcottah had deposed its commander, and, having seized both mails and treasure upon its march, was  
Aug. 20. nearing Masulipatam when, on the 20th, it was met by an express with intelligence of the submission of

the officers ; whereupon it restored the treasure and returned to its station. At Ellore and Chicacole the same thing happened with superficial differences, and in many cases the officers signed the test, receiving from Pater a pardon for themselves and for their men.

In Mysore, under the evil influence of Colonel John Bell of the Company's artillery, matters took a far more serious turn. That officer, who was in command at Seringapatam, defied the commandant of the division, seized the treasure in the fort, and persuaded the officers of two native battalions at Chitteldroog to lead their men under false pretences to Seringapatam. These latter were on their march when they were attacked by a body of Mysorean horse and the King's Twenty-fifth Dragoons, who had been collected by the Resident to intercept them. The unfortunate Sepoys skirmished for some time with the Mysoreans, and killed and wounded over one hundred of them ; but they did not resist the British, whom they believed to be their friends, and lost nearly four hundred and fifty killed, wounded, and missing, including one British officer. The remainder, with twenty British and nineteen native officers, and about eight hundred men, made their way to Seringapatam. Meanwhile, the Government had collected a large force to besiege that fortress ; and, blood having been spilled, the mutineers opened fire upon the besiegers and made a few sallies before they surrendered on the 23rd of August. The whole affair was unfortunate, for had not a warning from the Resident to the two battalions from Chitteldroog miscarried, the officers would have been aware that they must fight or surrender, and would have yielded. They had no intention of proceeding to extremities, though they had pushed the game of brag to a most dangerous and unwarrantable length. Still, the fact remains that the shedding of blood was really an accident ; and it is impossible not to think that it could have been averted by reasonable precautions, though the mutineers cannot be acquitted of the consequences.

1809. The mutiny was now practically at an end, but nothing could keep Barlow from worrying his victims unceasingly. In the first place he declined to recognise the pardons granted by General Pater to the garrisons of Masulipatam, Ellore, Samulcottah, and Chicacole; while in the south he pursued a still more exasperating policy. At Quilon, the scene of the recent hostilities in Travancore, Colonel Stuart of the King's Nineteenth Foot had for some time been in a most dangerous situation, being threatened by the disaffected regiments on one side, and by the natives, whose insurrection had only recently been quelled, on the other. While doing his duty faithfully and loyally he deplored Barlow's measures, which he described confidentially to Maitland as very violent and likely to lead to civil war. He had therefore behaved with studious moderation, in order not to excite men who were already in a highly inflammable state of mind; and hence, when the surrender of Hyderabad became known, his malcontent officers had easily been persuaded to return to their duty. It so happened, however, that these officers in Travancore had made a very telling rejoinder to the demand that they should sign the test. They had drawn up and signed a test of their own, declaring their loyalty to the King and their support of the authority of the Government of Madras according to the tenor of their commissions as explained in certain paragraphs of Lord Minto's despatch of the 27th of May. This was a palpable hit, for hereby they took advantage of the Governor-General's doctrine that officers had the right to disobey an order if they judged it to be criminal. Colonel Stuart, however, by gentleness and conciliation had overcome this insubordinate spirit, his arguments being much fortified by the successive submissions of the garrisons in the north, all of which had been regularly reported to him by the Military Secretary at Madras. All the officers had signed the Government's test unconditionally, and the trouble was subsiding in Travancore, when Barlow

issued an order to Stuart that the signatures of those <sup>1809.</sup> who had accepted the test in consequence of the surrender of Hyderabad were not to be admitted. He even went the length of superseding Stuart in his independent command for the obvious, though unstated, reason that the Colonel had shown undue leniency. The inevitable result was that the old sore was reopened, and the unhappy culprits driven again to desperation. Small wonder that, even before this occurrence, Stuart had written, "God send Lord Minto soon to Madras."

At length, on the 11th of September, Lord Minto <sup>Sept. 11.</sup> arrived at Madras after a bad passage of thirty-seven days from Calcutta. For nearly a fortnight he remained silent, not giving a sign of his intentions; but at last, on the 25th of September, he issued a second wordy and <sup>Sept. 25.</sup> pedantic pamphlet which he called a General Order. The purport of it was that amnesty was granted to the whole body of officers, with the exception of twenty-one, three of whom, namely, the commandants at Seringapatam, Jalna, and Masulipatam, were reserved for trial by court-martial, while the remaining eighteen received the option of a trial or dismissal from the service. But throughout the whole Order there was no mention of the Commander-in-Chief; and the Governor-General seemed to assume that the charge of disciplining armies lay with himself, whereas the warrant for holding courts-martial was entrusted not to him but to the Commander-in-Chief. That functionary was of course under the orders of the Governor-General; but if he had refused to hold a court-martial, the Governor-General had no further power than to displace him, and to find another Commander-in-Chief more obedient to himself. Nevertheless, Lord Minto, with singular blindness, never thought of bringing his own Commander-in-Chief from Calcutta to advise him. The result was that his General Order was not only wholly unmilitary, but actually subversive of every military principle.

He began by affirming that "it was not without the

1809. most afflicting agitation that he had affixed his final signature to the General Order "respecting the twenty-one officers above named, "and that it was with corresponding satisfaction that he performed the more grateful task of announcing a general and unconditional amnesty." There was really no occasion to weep over the necessity of bringing some mutineers to trial, or to rejoice over the pleasure of extending pardon to others. But Minto seemed to treat the whole affair not as a rebellion against the authority of the Company and the King, but as a mere local ferment; and he made no attempt whatever to bring home to the officers at large the heinousness of their crime. He used the words mutiny, rebellion, and sedition as synonymous, never pointing out that the offenders had been guilty of rebellion superadded to mutiny. But indeed he dwelt chiefly on the motives which dictated his actions, as though he were accountable to the army for them, and on his unwillingness to make examples of any kind; as if to encourage the officers to contrast his mildness with Barlow's severity, and make them once again a deliberative instead of an obedient body. Many thought that he should not have granted an absolute amnesty at all, but that he should have permitted the guilty parties to return to their duty pending signification of the King's pleasure, which would have showed them how serious had been their misconduct, and would have kept all in unpleasant but merited suspense for six months.

Again, it was quite wrong to give any officers the option of trial or dismissal. Minto excused it by saying that "the Court Martial might of necessity feel bound to pass sentences of greater severity than it was in contemplation to extend without distinction to the whole number of those committed for trial." But in this case he might have reduced the number of those to be tried, or exerted the prerogative of mercy in favour of some of the condemned; for it was a strange way to re-establish discipline by proclaiming that the laws against mutiny and rebellion were too severe to be enforced. Again, the

option of dismissal, that is to say of punishment, or trial, <sup>1809.</sup> prejudged the guilt of those to whom it was offered; and if any of those concerned had claimed the alternative of trial, it would have been impossible for a court-martial to acquit them, even if innocent, without flying in the face of the Governor-General. This was of a piece with Minto's previous assumption that Macdowall had been guilty of sedition; and it was difficult not to recall that Macdowall, Boles, and Capper, three of the best officers in the army, had been suspended for a minor offence, but that after open mutiny and rebellion on the part of hundreds of officers, no more than three of them had been selected for trial. Moreover, Minto's ignorant trifling with military matters did not end there. Two subalterns had been tried by court-martial for gross insubordination and sentenced to be cashiered. The Governor-General, in a long prosing order, approved the sentence but remitted the penalty, on the ground that the culprits should not be deprived of the benefit of the general amnesty. And this he did without a word to the Commander-in-Chief, to whom in right, in law and in common sense, the question should first have been referred.

The result was that the discipline of the army went from bad to worse. Barlow, in the first insolence of his triumph, declared that it had been "re-established on a solid basis"—an absolute absurdity, seeing that Lord Minto had laid down the doctrine that officers might use their private judgment as to obedience to orders, and Barlow had sent emissaries among the Sepoys to teach them to disobey their superiors. Barlow's conception of discipline may be gauged by the fact that he considered it safe when officers and men had been turned into two separate deliberative bodies. But, apart from this, he further laid down the proposition that the Sepoys were now held together no longer by their allegiance to their officers, but by their attachment to the State irrespective of any mediate commander. Moreover, having by wholesale suspensions stripped the native

1809. regiments altogether of officers, he made good the loss by wholesale introduction of raw and inexperienced lads from the King's regiments, who knew nothing of native ways nor of native languages. Thus the native army was left under no proper control at all, and the Sepoys had already begun to say, "Before long all white face gone. This Governor very fine Governor; he tell black men that they better than white men, and that Sepoy never mind again what they say." It need hardly be added that the Company's officers were set at bitter feud with the King's; and that the ill-feeling between the two was not softened by an address to Barlow from three commanding officers of the King's regiments, expressive of their obedience and steady determination to protect the Government. This effusion was offered in all loyalty and good faith, and was accepted by Sir George, who apparently did not perceive that, if it were a matter of choice and not of duty for officers to support the Government, they might equally at their will overthrow it. Such was Barlow's idea of discipline established on a solid basis.

Lord Minto's measures did nothing to better this state of affairs. The essence of the mutiny, as we have seen, lay in personal hatred of Barlow; and Minto's General Order was construed as a rebuff to the detested Governor. The courts-martial took place at Bangalore among most disgraceful scenes. Colonel John Bell, the worst offender of all, was escorted to court by every officer of the Company's service in the cantonments, who moved insolently in military array, and nearly rode down the president. His defence was drawn up by a lawyer; the Company's officers almost without exception committed perjury to save him; and there was much talk among his friends that they would not allow the extreme penalty to be enforced. At last, in March, the verdict was pronounced, and Bell was adjudged to be cashiered. The sentence should certainly have been death, whether it were executed or not; and the Commander-in-Chief returned it to the

court-martial for revision, but consented to confirm <sup>1809.</sup> the penalty of cashierment when the members declined to alter their judgment. The same thing happened in the case of Major Storey, the leader of the mutiny at Masulipatam, while Colonel Doveton, who commanded at Jalna, was actually acquitted. This last verdict the Commander-in-Chief declined to accept; and in April the court was dissolved and a new court formed under the presidency of Colonel Wilkinson, who had shown, as was thought, unnecessary severity at Trichinopoly. Judging that under his direction the new tribunal would be as severe as the former one had been lenient, the remaining officers accepted their dismissal without trial; and the punitive proceedings came to an end. But all was still violence and discontent, for the Company's officers were unchangeably sulky, rancorous, and insubordinate. Nearly everywhere they abjured all commerce with the King's officers; while quarrelling not less bitterly with each other upon the ground that this regiment or that "had deserted the cause." In February 1810 a correspondent at Madras wrote to Wellington in Portugal that only his coming as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief could restore things to their proper order;<sup>1</sup> and the ill-feeling was not wholly quenched even so late as 1835.

Looking back to the whole affair over the distance of a century, one is irresistibly forced to the conclusion that, with better management at headquarters, matters would never have come to the very dangerous point which they finally attained. It may be fairly granted that the spirit of the Madras army was bad, and that the officers had worked themselves up to a ridiculous pitch of arrogance over their grievances, real or supposed. Yet they knew as well as possible that even a successful rebellion against the Government would mean only the cutting of their own throats, sooner rather than later, by their own Sepoys. It is incredible that they should have seriously contemplated armed revolt; and indeed,

<sup>1</sup> *Wellington MSS.* Sir R. Farquhar to Wellington, 6th Feb. 1810.



1809. when once they had committed themselves to resistance, the crudeness of their organisation and the weakness and hesitation of their methods showed clearly that they had taken no thought and prepared no measures for decisive action. They had, as I have already said, no leaders, and therefore no settled policy ; but this makes their unanimity in proceeding to extremes of recklessness the more remarkable. How then was it that a body of public servants, who had in the past deserved nobly of the State, threw all principle, conduct, and prudence to the winds, and, while professing unchanged loyalty to the King, risked certain massacre for themselves and chaos and ruin for British India rather than submit to the authority of the Government of Madras ?

“There must be some deep error in any Government,” wrote Maitland, “when the whole of its army, headed by its officers, directly disobeys and defies it.” The truth is that the officers were simply goaded to desperation by the arbitrary methods of Barlow. In truth he never ceased to worry, bully, and degrade them. His spies and agents must have been everywhere, tampering with the Sepoys, and listening for every careless word of an officer ; and upon their report followed punishment, which fell as a bolt from the blue upon the chosen victims, who asked in vain to be told who was their accuser and what was his charge against them. No one could feel safe ; and it was of no advantage for any to behave themselves well, since innocent and guilty alike were debarred from making a defence. Barlow has generally been written down as a strict but mistaken man. Had this been all he might be pardoned, but he was more ; he was an unscrupulous and a deceitful man. He initiated, in fact, a reign of terror, such a reign as has in all countries invariably brought about either revolution or systematic assassination. It is not therefore surprising that in Madras he kindled a mutiny. The most charitable name by which to call him would be that of a fanatic. A little tact, a little reasonableness, and a little con-

sideration—in fact, a little inclination to treat men as 1809. human creatures instead of as senseless machines—would have sufficed to rally the officers to the Government, and prepared them to receive with a good grace some schooling in discipline. But to Barlow concession was an abominable thing; and rather than grant one tittle, he preferred to launch the British of Southern India into civil war. There is nothing more to be said of such a man than that he was absolutely unfit to be placed in any position of authority whatever. It is sometimes said that the best procedure in case of a mutiny is to hang the ringleaders and the commanding officer. The saying is amply justified by the case of Barlow at Madras.

Nevertheless, Sir George's powers of mischief might have been greatly reduced had Lord Minto realised earlier how serious was the state of affairs in Madras. The Governor-General had indeed some excuse for his long inaction in the fact that Barlow persistently deceived him, by representing the mutiny as the work of a few discontented individuals only and not of the whole body of officers. Nevertheless, Minto must bear a very great share of the responsibility for the ultimate disaster, since by his inconsiderate support of Barlow he put himself out of court as a mediator, and deprived the officers of their last hope of a hearing. To do him justice, he seems to have realised that Barlow was greatly to blame, but in his efforts to please both sides he cut a deplorable figure. It is difficult to say which is the more pitiable, the conceit with which he endeavoured to deal with military men without military advice, or the childish literary vanity which deceived him into the belief that angry feelings can be soothed and discipline restored by an avalanche of pretentious wordiness. Never has man taken greater and more successful pains to stamp himself with an indelible brand of mediocrity.

For the rest, it must be recorded that the principal demands of the mutineers were all conceded in the

1809. course of the next few years. Not only was a general amnesty proclaimed at once, as we have seen, but before 1814 every officer, except two, who had been suspended, dismissed or cashiered, was restored to the service; of the remaining two, one was reinstated in 1814, and only one, Lieutenant-colonel John Bell, was, with good reason, left an outcast for ever. Nor did the arch-offender escape. Sir George Barlow's fate hung for long in the balance at the India House, but at last, in 1812, after three years of angry debate, he was recalled and never employed again. His name should be remembered as that of the man who pushed to its logical extreme the principle that a British officer has no title to justice, and so brought about the illogical but inevitable result—a mutiny.

The authorities used for this narrative of the mutiny are *Record Office*; C.O. Ceylon; Maitland to Castlereagh, 26th, 28th, 31st July, 5th, 13th, 18th, 19th, 20th Aug., 1st Oct. 1809; to Cooke, 7th Aug. 1809; to Castlereagh, 25th Jan., 20th, 21st Feb., 25th March 1810. The enclosures contain all the most essential documents. Wilson's *History of the Madras Army*, iii. 285-295; Kaye's *Life of Sir John Malcolm*; Minto's *Life of Lord Minto*.

## CHAPTER XLI

SCARCELY had Maitland recovered the troops which he had sent to India for suppression of the mutiny, when he was called upon to furnish another contingent of Europeans for an attack upon Mauritius. Since the renewal of the war in 1803, French cruisers and privateers from that island had played havoc with British commerce, and in 1807 the port of Calcutta alone had suffered a loss of £200,000 within six weeks. It had therefore been decided to check this evil by strict blockade of Mauritius; and, as a preliminary measure, a small force had been sent from Bombay early in 1809, under the command of Colonel Keating 1809. of the Fifty-sixth, to seize the island of Rodriguez, and to convert it into an advanced base for both army and navy. This was easily accomplished; but in September Keating, not content with a passive attitude, Sept. made a raid upon the neighbouring island of Bourbon with about four hundred men, captured the port of St. Paul with all its defences and shipping, and recovered several British vessels. Encouraged by this success, the Government of India resolved to equip an expedition for the complete reduction of the French islands; and accordingly in the spring of 1810 a force of some 1810. thirty-five hundred men<sup>1</sup> was embarked from Madras, arriving safely on the 20th of June at Rodriguez. June 20.

<sup>1</sup> Madras Artillery . . . . .	100
Flank cos. H.M. 12th and 33rd . . . . .	400
H.M. 69th . . . . .	730
H.M. 86th . . . . .	420
	<hr/>
	1650

1810. There Colonel Keating took over the command of the whole, and, to make his four thousand men as imposing as possible on paper, organised them into four brigades.<sup>1</sup> On the 3rd of July he sailed for St. Denis, the capital of Bourbon, and arriving before it on July 7. the 7th, began the disembarkation according to the plan which he had designed; namely, that the First Brigade should land at Grand Chaloupe, about six miles west of the town, and the remainder near the Rivière des Pluies, about three miles east of it. Colonel Fraser with the First Brigade accomplished his task without loss, and at once advanced to St. Denis, where he took up a position to intercept any reinforcements that might arrive from St. Paul. Keating, however, was less fortunate. About one hundred and fifty men had been landed, not without loss of several soldiers drowned, when the surf forbade any more boats to approach the shore; and this little party was left stranded with all its ammunition wet and half of its arms lost. Several bands of the enemy approached, and opened a timid and straggling fire upon them; whereupon Commodore Rowley, as a last resource, ordered one of the transports to run ashore, hoping that this would serve as a breakwater to the boats. Another hundred or two of men were thus set on land before dark, and Keating then directed them to attack

1/6th Madras N.I.	. . . .	850	
2/12th Madras N.I.	. . . .	850	
Detachment 2nd batt. Pioneers	. . . .	200	
			1900
		Total	<u>3550</u>

<sup>1</sup> 1st Brigade. Col. Fraser (H.M. 86th).

H.M. 86th, 1/6th M.N.I.

2nd Brigade. Lt.-col. Drummond (H.M. 86th).

Marines, 2/12th M.N.I.

3rd Brigade. Lt.-col. M'Leod (H.M. 69th).

69th, detachment Bombay N.I.

4th Brigade. Lt.-col. Campbell (H.M. 33rd).

Flank cos. H.M. 12th and 33rd, detachment H.M. 56th, Pioneers.

and capture a small fort about three miles distant, while 1810. he sailed with the remainder of the troops to Grand Chaloupe.

Meanwhile, Fraser, finding himself unsupported, had bivouacked for the night on a height about a mile and a half from St. Denis. On the following morning he July 8. advanced and found the enemy's regular troops, some three hundred strong, awaiting him in the plain, with one flank resting on a redoubt and the other on a river. Fraser at once carried the redoubt with the bayonet in spite of a brave resistance, and, finding that the enemy was opening fire upon the work from field-guns near the town, returned the fire from two cannon which had been left unspiked. He was presently reinforced by a part of Drummond's brigade; and in the evening the Governor sent out a flag of truce to propose a cessation of arms. A British officer was accordingly sent into the town to negotiate, when Keating suddenly appeared on the scene, having galloped all the way from Grand Chaloupe, and in some mysterious fashion penetrated the enemy's outposts. In a few minutes he had hectored the unfortunate Governor into surrender; and the French regular troops, to the number of five hundred, became prisoners of war, while the militia were allowed to disperse to their homes. St. Paul capitulated on the 10th, and therewith the island passed into Keating's July 10. hands. The casualties of the British were ninety-seven killed and wounded, of whom sixty-nine belonged to the Eighty-sixth. As this regiment took only about four hundred men into the field, its losses cannot be considered trifling.

The next enterprise, after a month's interval, was an attack on Isle de la Passe, an islet at the mouth of the south-eastern harbour of Port Bourbon on Mauritius itself. This was successfully carried out by the boats of the King's frigates *Sirius* and *Iphigenia*; a small garrison was furnished to hold the new capture; and an officer of engineers took in hand the work of fortification. The command of the island was entrusted

1810. to Captain Willoughby of the *Nereide*, the most insatiable fire-eater in the King's Navy; and he a few days later attacked and carried the fort upon Pointe du Diable, which commanded the north-eastern entrance into the Great Harbour. Thus all the French vessels in the haven were successfully sealed up by the skill and daring of the British seamen; and nothing more was necessary than to await the coming of the expedition which was known to be preparing in India. The devil, however, now entered into the naval officers, and persuaded them to attack the French vessels in the port single-handed. It is to be feared that their motive was the old one which had been responsible for so many mishaps, at Teneriffe under Nelson, at Curaçoa under Duckworth, and at hundreds of places under unknown and forgotten captains—prize-money. The *Sirius* and *Nereide* made the first attempt, which failed owing to the grounding of the former vessel. On the
- Aug. 23. following day the *Iphigenia* and *Magicienne* joined them, and the attack was renewed. The *Sirius* and the *Magicienne* both took the ground at the entrance to the harbour, and the *Nereide* stranded herself within it. After losing two hundred and thirty out of two hundred and eighty men from the fire of ships and batteries, Willoughby was obliged to haul down his flag; the *Magicienne* was abandoned and blown up on the 24th; the *Sirius* shared the same fate on the 25th; and only with great difficulty was the *Iphigenia* warped back to
- Aug. 26. her station at Isle de la Passe on the night of the 26th. Here, being in isolation and surrounded by four French frigates which had been summoned from Port Louis on the other side of the island, and being also short of
- Aug. 28. food and water, the *Iphigenia* surrendered, on condition that her crew and the garrison of Isle de la Passe should be sent to the Cape of Good Hope.

Thus the fruits of previous operations were lost, and, more serious still, the superiority at sea passed to the French, who proceeded to blockade Bourbon. On

Sept. 13. the 13th of September the British fleet suffered another

reverse through the capture of the frigate *Africaine* 1810. by two French men-of-war, though she was immediately retaken by Commodore Rowley's flag-ship, the *Boadicea*. On the 17th yet another frigate, the *Ceylon*,<sup>1</sup> Sept. 17. with Sir John Abercromby, the Commander-in-Chief of the expedition, and his staff on board, sailed by Port Louis, knowing nothing of the disaster at Isle de la Passe, and was captured after a smart action by two French frigates, the *Vénus* and *Victor*. She was, however, recovered on the next day by the *Boadicea*, to Sept. 18. whom the *Vénus*, crippled in the action of the preceding day, fell an easy victim. Thus the balance of naval power began once more to readjust itself, and the Commodore strained every nerve to fit out his damaged vessels for service again. On the 10th of October Admiral Oct. 10. Bertie in the *Nisus* arrived at Bourbon from the Cape of Good Hope, and on the 15th sailed with five frigates for Mauritius. From thence, as the French squadron showed no willingness to come out and fight them, the Admiral and General passed on in the *Africaine* to Rodriguez, leaving the rest of the squadron to continue the blockade.

On the 22nd of October the first contingent of Oct. 22. troops arrived from Bombay under convoy of Admiral Drury with one line-of-battle ship and six frigates. On the 6th of November the contingent from Madras Nov. 6. likewise came in, and three weeks later that from Bengal, which was so tardy that Abercromby had half decided to begin operations without it. The entire force now numbered about ten thousand men, of whom some three-fifths were Europeans and the remainder Sepoys;<sup>2</sup> and this total could be augmented, if need

<sup>1</sup> One hundred of her complement were men of the Sixty-ninth and Eighty-sixth regiments.

<sup>2</sup> 1st Brigade. Lt.-col. Picton (H.M. 12th).

H.M. 12th and 22nd,  $\frac{1}{2}$  batt. Madras Volunteers.\*

2nd Brigade. Lt.-col. Gibbs (H.M. 59th).

H.M. 59th, 300 H.M. 89th, 1 co. H.M. 87th,  $\frac{1}{2}$  batt. Madras Volunteers.

\* Volunteers signifies, of course, only regular Sepoys who had volunteered for service across the sea.



1810. were, by a naval brigade of fifteen to seventeen hundred  
 Nov. sailors. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir John Abercromby, was a son of old Sir Ralph, and had served with him in all the campaigns of the war of the Revolution. In 1803 he had been among the travellers in France who were taken prisoners by Napoleon, but after Vimeiro he had been exchanged for General Brennier, and had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in Bombay. Curiously enough, the naval officer, Beaver by name, who had conducted the famous debarkation in Aboukir Bay was present with the fleet as captain of the *Nisus*, and was charged with the arrangements for the landing. The French Commander-in-Chief was General Decaen, to whom, it will be remembered, Napoleon had in 1803 entrusted the most important of his commissions in the East. The regular troops at his disposal did not exceed thirteen hundred, of whom about five hundred were Irish, for the most part recruited from among prisoners taken in captured East India-men. Besides these he had a National Guard, nominally ten thousand strong, but of doubtful value.

It had always been believed that a descent upon Mauritius by any considerable force was impossible, the coast being surrounded by a reef which, as was supposed, forbade the anchorage of any great number of transports. But, during the long interval between the capture of Bourbon and the arrival of the expedition, careful reconnaissance and soundings had proved this belief to be fallacious; and when the armament finally

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3rd Brigade. Lt.-col. Kelso.

H.M. 14th, 2nd Bengal Volunteers batt.

4th Brigade. Lt.-col. M'Leod (H.M. 69th).

H.M. 69th, 300 Royal Marines, flank cos. 6th and 12th Madras N.I.

5th Brigade. Lt.-col. Smith (H.M. 65th).

1 troop 25th L.D., H.M. 65th, 1st Bengal Volunteers batt.

Reserve Brigade. Lt.-col. Keating.

Flank cos. H.M. 12th and 33rd, H.M. 84th, 2 cos. H.M. 56th, 1 co. H.M. 14th and 89th, detachment of Bombay N.I.

sailed from Rodriguez on the 22nd of November, every detail was known as to the proposed place of disembarkation. The first attack was to be delivered on Port Louis, where the enemy's squadron of six frigates was blockaded; and the British armament, altogether about seventy sail, steered for Grande Baie, a little to westward of Cape Malheureux, the most northerly point of the island. To gain the anchorage the fleet had to pass through a channel never before attempted by any British vessel, and never used by the French except in cases of extreme need. Yet this feat of pilotage was boldly undertaken and successfully accomplished; the entire armament coming to an anchor on the 29th less than a mile from the shore without the slightest mishap. The disembarkation followed with all the formalities that had been observed at Aboukir, though the approach lay not to an open beach occupied by a powerful force, but through narrow channels between coral reefs, where no enemy was to be found for many miles. The staff-officer who was responsible for the advance of the force chafed over the delay thus caused; but Beaver was inexorable.

By two o'clock in the afternoon the greater part of the army had been landed; the Fifth Brigade was left to secure the landing-place and bring up the ammunition and stores, while the remainder marched for Port Louis, a distance of about twelve miles as the crow flies. The way lay first along the beach, and then for three or four miles through dense forest, impenetrable on both sides, at the outlet of which a small party of National Guards fired a few shots, but was speedily brushed away. Emerging into the plain, the column took the road which followed the coast, and after traversing another mile halted for the night, the men suffering much from thirst and from fatigue after long confinement on the transports. At daybreak the force set out once more, and at about eight o'clock reached some powder-mills situated on a headland from four to five miles north of Port Louis; where, a

1810. strong position being found and water being abundant, Abercromby decided to give his exhausted soldiers a day's rest. At noon Decaen in person reconnoitred the British line with a party of horse and foot, but was driven back after a sharp skirmish wherein several men fell on both sides. Supplies were landed from the fleet in the course of the day, and by the next morning the troops had recovered themselves.

- Dec. 1. The march was therefore resumed at daybreak in an easterly direction; and at the first obstacle, the River des Pamplemousses,<sup>1</sup> a party of the enemy was encountered drawn up with artillery to hinder the passage. These were speedily dispersed, upon the arrival of a couple of guns, with slight loss to the British; but a little farther on near Rivière Sèche<sup>2</sup> the enemy's sharp-shooters, having ground favourable to their operations, opened a harassing fire and kept the British skirmishers fully employed. When the stream was finally reached the French were found to be arrayed in force on the opposite bank, from whence they opened a very heavy fire of grape and round shot on the British columns. Abercromby therefore wheeled his men to the right, and after deploying three or four corps to his left, fell upon the enemy's flank, routed them, and captured three guns. The British followed in pursuit until they came within range of the cannon of Port Louis; and there Abercromby halted, resting his left on the Montagne Longue, an eminence which rises abruptly from the plain about two miles and a half north-east of the town, and posting one battalion on the summit. On the following day Decaen sent in a flag of truce, and before nightfall a treaty was concluded for the surrender of the island, upon the condition that the French soldiers and seamen should be sent back to France. The capitulation was by some considered too lenient, for Decaen had not troops enough to man his fortifications, which could therefore have been stormed with little
- Dec. 2.

<sup>1</sup> On modern maps River des Citrons.

<sup>2</sup> Now the southern branch of River des Citrons.

delay. However, the immediate acquisition of Mauritius <sup>1810.</sup> itself was, perhaps rightly, considered to be the main point, including as it did over two hundred guns mounted in the forts, thirty-six ships of all descriptions, and the liberation of two thousand British prisoners. The casualties in the operations did not exceed twenty-eight killed, ninety-four wounded, and forty-five missing ; but it is to be noticed that the flank companies of the Twelfth, which bore the brunt of the action on the Rivière Sèche, lost two officers and thirty men killed and wounded, deservedly earning Abercromby's special thanks for their conduct.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Government of India had already turned its attention to the minor Dutch settlements in the east, and first of all to the Moluccas. In October 1809 three ships of war, carrying one company of the Hundred and Second and a detachment of Madras Artillery, sailed for Amboyna, and with trifling loss <sup>1810.</sup> accomplished the reduction of that island. The fortifica- <sup>Feb. 17.</sup> tions mounted over two hundred guns, and the garrison exceeded thirteen hundred men, European and native, so that this success would seem to be remarkable, were it not that the Dutch commander was subsequently tried at Java and shot for treachery. In May <sup>1810</sup> <sup>May.</sup> three more ships with two companies of the Hundred and Second sailed for Banda Neira ; and on the 9th of <sup>Aug. 9.</sup> August the principal fort, which mounted over fifty guns, was surprised and carried by escalade in the face of a garrison of seven hundred regular troops. This daring feat of arms, concerted by Captain Cole of the King's ship *Caroline*, was among the most brilliant little exploits of the war, but belongs more strictly to the history of the Navy than to that of the Army. Lastly, in August 1810 a detachment of the Hundred and Second under Captain Forbes sailed in the King's ship *Dover* for

<sup>1</sup> The best account of the Mauritius and Bourbon expeditions is in *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, i. 339-403. Other details are in Abercromby's despatches printed in Wilson's *History of the Madras Army*, iii. 300-313.

1810. Ternate ; where the troops, landing on the 28th, stormed  
Aug. 28. a detached work and, turning its guns upon the principal fort, succeeded, with the help of the *Dover*, in reducing the place to submission. Here again the garrison of five hundred European regular troops, besides as many natives, far exceeded the attacking force in numbers, so that the capture of Ternate must likewise be accounted highly creditable to the officers and men who accomplished it.

The Government of India now braced itself for a more formidable task, the conquest of Java, the chief seat of the Dutch Empire in the east. That Empire had indeed suffered much at English hands since the beginning of the Great War, and its trade had been almost annihilated by the overpowering superiority of the British at sea ; but Napoleon had not given up hope of restoring both, principally by making Java a military centre for attack upon the British settlements. With this idea he had in 1808 sent out General Daendels, the brave and able soldier whom we saw in North Holland in 1799, to place the colony in a thorough state of defence, and to organise its resources upon a military basis. Daendels accordingly constructed roads throughout the island ;<sup>1</sup> erected a fort named Fort Ludowyk to command the passage between the islands of Java and Madura ; and removed the seat of government and chief military station from the pestilential flats of Batavia to a healthier site, which he fortified so elaborately as to render it apparently impregnable. Having thus secured his base, Daendels contemplated taking the offensive, for which, owing to the capture of every other Dutch settlement by the British, he had ample opportunity. Above all, the recently captured Molucca Islands were simply hostages to fortune while the French remained unharmed in

<sup>1</sup> Daendels expended six thousand Javanese lives in cutting one of these roads through a morass. He seems to have been a brute in every way, corrupt, greedy, and oppressive, but an able man. *Lord Minto in India*, p. 302.

Java ; and hence the acquisition of the one led almost irresistibly to the need for mastering the other.

In fact, we are now observing in the East the forces which we have already noticed at work in the West Indies and in the Levant. The Navy, overburdened with the task of protecting commerce, called loudly first for fresh naval bases of its own to enable it to maintain effective blockades, and next for destruction of naval bases of the enemy so as to obviate the necessity of any blockade at all. It is not, therefore, superfluous to insist again on the fact that a powerful army is no less important for the conservation of trade in war than is a strong navy ; for every hostile base captured means the allotment of a military garrison to hold it, or in other words the paralysis of a portion of the military force for offensive purposes. It is conceivable that the principle of seizing an enemy's bases may be carried so far as to render a country with a small army powerless for aggression, and therefore to compel it to submit to an enemy's initiative. Indeed, we have seen that this was the practical result of Pitt's policy from 1793 to 1798, a policy which virtually resolved itself into the employment of England's military resources to collect the money for payment of subsidies to foreign powers. There was, however, at this time no reason to dread such danger in India as could make an enterprise beyond seas a perilous venture. The British and Indian Governments had taken measures to counteract Napoleon's vague menaces of invasion in concert with Russia by sending missions to Teheran, to Cabul, and to the Ameers of Scinde ; while, so far as concerned the most formidable of recent mischiefs—the mutiny of the Madras army—no better remedy could be found than to employ the troops on active service. It must be added that both Navy and Army loved beyond all things an attack upon a rich commercial settlement, owing to the prospect of gaining prize-money. Hence, probably both Generals and Admirals urged the expedition to Java earnestly upon the Governor-General, who,

1810. on his side, was not loth to associate his name with a great and important conquest. But though such minor considerations may have exerted some unconscious influence upon the parties, the decision of the Government of India was doubtless prompted in the main by sound reasoning.

Nevertheless, the enterprise was a serious one, for the voyage was long ; the navigation was intricate and little explored ; Daendels was known to be a capable and energetic officer ; and his force was reputed to amount to twenty thousand men. The expeditions to Bourbon and Mauritius, committed chiefly to European battalions, had swallowed up not a few of them through sickness and garrisons ; and it would therefore be necessary to send over sea a larger number of native troops than had ever been despatched before. The Sepoys of the Bengal Army were called upon to volunteer for the service, to which they were not bound by the terms of their enlistment. They were splendid men, surpassing the majority of British battalions in size of body, and incomparably finer than the Sepoys of Madras ; but, more than this, they were Rajpoots, men of high caste, to whom the crossing of the sea and the hardships of the voyage were a strain alike upon their religious convictions and their self-respect. Yet they came forward nobly to the number of over five thousand. The chief command was entrusted to Sir Samuel Auchmuty, who had been appointed to succeed Macdowall at Madras ; and, in honour of so great an occasion, the Governor-General accompanied the expedition in person.

The armament, which included four line-of-battle ships and forty smaller vessels of war, sailed in three divisions ;<sup>1</sup> two from Madras on the 18th and 29th of

<sup>1</sup> *1st Madras Division* : Horse Artillery (152), 22nd Dragoons (260), H.M. 14th (926), 59th (476), 89th (549), 102nd as pioneers (37), gun-lascars (105), tent-lascars (122), dooly-corps (97), artificers (45), puckallies (55). Total with officers, 2926.

*2nd Madras Division* : Horse Artillery (7), 22nd Dragoons (154),

April 1811; and one, apparently from the Hooghly, 1811. several weeks earlier. The second Madras division just escaped a violent storm, which played havoc among the shipping in the harbour, but did little damage to the vessels at sea beyond causing the suffocation of forty-three out of sixty horses on one transport. Both of the Madras divisions reached Penang by the 21st of May 21. May; and from thence proceeded to Malacca, whither Auchmuty had already gone forward to join the Bengal division which, having arrived some weeks before, had been landed and encamped near the town. On the 1st June 1. of June the whole force was assembled at Malacca, and Auchmuty proceeded to distribute it into three divisions, which he called by the old-fashioned names of the Advance, under Colonel Gillespie; the Line under Major-general Wetherall; and the Reserve under Colonel Wood; appellations for which I shall substitute those of Gillespie's division, Wetherall's division, and Wood's division, though in truth the first and third were no more than brigades.<sup>1</sup> After much debate as to the course to be taken by the fleet, owing to imperfect

Royal Artillery (94), H.M. 14th (10), 59th (530), 69th (858), 78th (1054), 1st batt. pioneers (144), 2nd batt. pioneers (165), gun-lascars (99), tent-lascars (210). Total with officers, 3325.

*Bengal Division*: Gov.-Gen.'s bodyguard (107), 2 cos. Bengal Artillery (150), 1st batt. 20th (afterwards 25th) Bengal N.I. (1501), 4 batts. volunteers Bengal N.I. (3592), 1 light infantry batt. Bengal N.I. (576), pioneers (361). Total, 6029. Grand Total, 12,280.

*Gillespie's Division*—(Advance):

Cavalry: Gov.-Gen.'s bodyguard, detachment 22nd L.D.

Artillery: 2 troops Horse Artillery.

Infantry: detachment 22nd L.D. (dismounted), batt. of Grenadier cos., batt. of Light cos., detachment of H.M. 89th, detachment of Marines, Bengal N.I. light infantry batt., Pioneers.

*Wetherall's Division*—(Line):

Right Brigade. Col. Gibbs.

H.M. 14th and 59th, 5th batt. Bengal N.I.

Left Brigade. Lt.-Col. Adams.

H.M. 69th and 78th, 6th batt. Bengal N.I.



1811. knowledge of the prevailing winds and currents, the Admiral was persuaded by the opportune arrival of a surveying vessel to proceed through the straits of Singapore to Cape Sambar, the extreme south-westerly point of Borneo, and thence to stretch across the sea of Java towards Batavia. Accordingly, the armament
- July 8-11. again sailed in three divisions between the 8th and 11th of July, two officers being sent in advance to choose
- July 20. a convenient point for disembarkation. On the 20th the whole arrived off Cape Sambar, where intelligence reached Auchmuty that General Daendels had left Java, and that General Janssens, whom the British had already met at the Cape of Good Hope, had come to take his place. Advice was also received that a small detachment of the Fourteenth, Marines, and Eighty-ninth, which had been landed at Bantam by a cruising squadron, had completely defeated five hundred troops sent from Batavia to attack them. This was of good augury; and further information, that Janssens was undoubtedly collecting the mass of his troops at Batavia, confirmed Auchmuty in his resolution to land as close to that capital as possible.

- Meanwhile, his reconnoitring officers had struck the coast of Java at Cheribon, whence after coasting westward
- July 14. for fifty leagues they anchored on the 14th of July in Batavia roads. On the 15th they made closer exploration eastward in boats, and landing at a village named Chilingching about twelve miles from the capital, found there what they wanted. From sheer carelessness, their escort of thirty men was captured on this occasion, and the two officers narrowly missed the same fate; but, having escaped to their ship, they continued their investigations, and on the 1st of August rejoined the fleet in the nick of time a little to the east of Batavia.
- Aug. 4. Three days later the armament anchored off Chiling-

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*Wood's Division—(Reserve):*

Flank batt. Bengal N.I.

1/20th batt. Bengal N.I.

3rd and 4th batts. Bengal N.I.

Field Artillery (Royal & E.I. Company's).

ching, which was found to be unguarded, the difficulties of navigation being supposed by the enemy to afford sufficient protection ; and at two o'clock in the afternoon the disembarkation began. The country was a dead flat, but the chosen position combined several advantages. In the first place the village was situated on an island about nine miles long by one mile broad, formed by a canal running to Batavia on the north, by the river Anjole on the south and west, and by the river Maronde on the east ; so that it was effectually shielded against surprise. Secondly, there issued from it two good roads, one leading to the capital, the other to Cornelis, about seven miles south of the capital, where Daendels had formed the entrenched camp, which, as he hoped, was to be the salvation of Java. Thus Auchmuty was able to choose his own point for attack, keeping his enemy in doubt as to his intentions.

In half an hour Gillespie's division was landed, the Governor-General himself being one of the first ashore ;<sup>1</sup> and the Colonel at once seized the bridge over the canal which led to Chilingching, besides another beyond it over the Anjole, occupying the village, and pushing his advanced parties to the Cornelis road. Wetherall's division took up a line a little farther forward with its right resting on the sea, and its left on the canal ; while the Reserve, most of which was disembarked before nightfall, guarded the landing-place. During the night the enemy sent a patrol along the Batavia road, which retired hastily on being greeted with two rounds of canister shot ; and on the following day, Aug. 5. upon information that a hostile column was approaching from the south, Gillespie marched out six miles to attack it, but soon ascertained that it had retreated. This day's work proved, however, that the long voyage had

<sup>1</sup> He jumped into the water waist-deep ; whereas Auchmuty, who was five years younger (55 against Lord Minto's 60) was carried ashore on a seaman's back. An officer who saw them made the unspoken criticism, "This is the difference between an old soldier and an old fool." *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, ii. 30.

1811. told heavily upon the British troops, for not only  
Aug. 5. were there several deaths from sunstroke, but those who escaped this evil were utterly exhausted. Partly for this reason, partly in the hope of finding ample resources for his campaign, Auchmuty had resolved to occupy Batavia before he went farther. But the General had no means of transport, for all cattle had been driven away by order of the Governor, and communication with the sea was precarious. He therefore organised the followers of the army into a corps of bearers, calculating that with five days' provisions carried in this way, and as many more carried by the men themselves, he could leave his base for at any rate ten days. The inhabitants at Chilingching had fortunately proved amicable and brought in abundance of supplies, being encouraged thereto by the excellent behaviour of the troops. Though acres of fresh vegetables and swarms of poultry tempted the men on every side, not one thing was taken by them, but all was honestly bought and paid for. Nevertheless it was evident that a wary and enterprising General, if he used the resources open to him, might give Auchmuty a great deal of trouble.

Aug. 6. On the 6th Gillespie and his staff reconnoitred the road and country towards Batavia as far as Anjole Pont, two miles from the town, when the bridge over the river was discovered to have been destroyed. Not the slightest opposition to this party was attempted, though the ground was most intricate and apt for defence. "The country," wrote Lord Minto, "is like Chinese paper on a wall—canals, tanks, and narrow ways between—here and there a little dry ground, and these spaces in a high state of cultivation." Gillespie's division on this day marched down to the Batavia road at Tanjong Priok, some six miles from the town; and on the

Aug. 7. evening of the 7th passed the Anjole on a rough temporary bridge of boats, which had been brought up from the sea. Once again no resistance was offered to this movement, though the men had been obliged to

pass from boat to boat in single file ; and by dawn 1811. Gillespie's division was quartered in the suburbs, while Aug. 7. Wetherall's division moved up to the Anjole in support of it ; the Reserve remaining at Chilingching. On the Aug. 8. 8th the Mayor, in response to a summons, surrendered Batavia ; but no information could be obtained as to the enemy. Large quarters of the city were deserted, Janssens having compelled all the wealthier inhabitants to retire into the interior ; the conduits of drinking water had been cut ; some of the stores of produce had been burned and others thrown open to the rabble, so that the streets were littered with sugar and coffee. This last measure greatly exasperated the British, who had framed high hopes of prize-money.

In the circumstances only a small force was for the present pushed into the town ; and Lord Minto sent his aide-de-camp to General Janssens at Cornelis to summon him to surrender the island. This officer was allowed to proceed as far as Weltevreden unmolested, and was free to observe for himself that there was no obstacle to the advance of the troops. From that point he was driven blind-folded in a carriage, but was able from its motion to ascertain that the road had not been cut up, and that the bridges were still standing. Moreover, the sound of horses and guns moving about him showed pretty plainly that the principal force of the enemy had not retreated into the lines of Cornelis. The utmost vigilance was therefore observed by the British in the town on that night ; and at eleven o'clock the troops were marched quietly into the great square and bidden to lie on their arms. Hardly had they reached the appointed place when a hostile column came down upon the picquet at the drawbridge leading to the Weltevreden road. The British advanced sentry fired and killed the foremost man ; the drawbridge was raised ; and Gillespie instantly sallied out by the western side of the town to take the enemy in flank. They did not, however, await his coming. They had expected to find only a small isolated party

1811. in the town and to overwhelm it ; but retired at once upon finding themselves deceived.

Aug. 9. On the 9th a proper bridge of boats was thrown over the Anjole ; and early on the morning of the

Aug. 10. 10th Wetherall's division crossed the river, while Gillespie's moved southward upon Weltevreedén. Just before starting Gillespie and the whole of his staff were poisoned by some drugged coffee which had been prepared for them by a former servant of Daendels. Happily they were not disabled, and, after pouring what remained of the coffee down the rascal's throat, pursued their way. A short march brought the division to Weltevreedén, which was found to be deserted, the enemy having withdrawn to a strong position a mile farther to the south ; and Gillespie, having permission to attack, continued his advance in two columns, the left or eastern column following the highway to Cornelis, the right column a smaller parallel road a little to west of it. The enemy's array was concealed by large pepper-plantations except upon their right, which rested on a rivulet called the Slokan, immediately to east of the road to Cornelis. They had blockaded the road itself by abatis, and unlimbered four guns in rear of it ; and from thence their line was extended upon high ground parallel with a cross-road which ran from east to west towards the village of Tanabang. From the nature of the position, as it is described, it must have been impossible to ascertain the enemy's numbers ; but to judge from the fact that a general, Jumelle, was in command, and three more generals engaged, the force was probably at least double in numerical strength of the British.

Gillespie's first idea had been to hold the enemy's right with his left-hand column, while his right-hand column turned the enemy's left flank ; but presently he realised that the track taken by the latter column went no farther than to the cross-road to Tanabang, and that he must seek another point of attack. Accordingly he brought up two of the four guns of his horse-

artillery to answer the enemy's cannon; sent his <sup>1811.</sup> skirmishers forward into the pepper-plantations; and <sup>Aug. 10.</sup> deployed both columns on the cross-road aforesaid. This evolution called down a tremendous fire from the whole length of the enemy's array; and Gillespie, realising that on ground so intricate he could not advance in line, ordered Major Butler of the Eighty-ninth to enter the enclosures on the west of the enemy's guns, and to take the battery in flank. The order was most gallantly executed; the cannon were captured, the escort, both infantry and cavalry, was driven off, and was pursued up the road to Cornelis, by the Eighty-ninth with the whole of Gillespie's division at their backs. The single troop of the Twenty-second Dragoons by some accident did not come up in time to cut the fugitives off; but Gillespie was for chasing them actually into the entrenched camp, and did in fact bring his men under fire of its guns. Happily Auchmuty interposed to prevent any such folly, for strong reinforcements of the enemy had already moved out of the camp, and were only checked by the arrival of Wetherall's division. Gillespie's troops, therefore, were drawn off before they could suffer from the artillery in the hostile redoubts. Their entire loss did not exceed ninety-one killed and wounded, more than half of which fell upon the Eighty-ninth. That of the enemy was reckoned to have exceeded three hundred, the wounded including General Alberti, Chief of Janssens's Staff, who had recently arrived in Java after three campaigns in Spain.

This was an important success, for it gave the British possession of Weltevreden, a salubrious cantonment with every possible accommodation for the army in the way of barracks, of three hundred guns, large quantities of stores, and a certain number of horses and native labourers attached to the Dutch army. It had been Daendels's policy, faithfully imitated by Janssens, to tempt an invader to occupy the pestilential city of Batavia, where his army would melt away from sickness

1811. under the eyes of the healthy garrison at Weltevreden ; but this cunning device had been overthrown. Moreover, the facility of water-transport made the carriage of supplies and stores from the fleet a simple matter ; and the capture of the arsenal had furnished plenty of heavy guns and ammunition, so that the siege of the lines of Cornelis would present no difficulties.

The entrenched camp consisted of a parallelogram about a mile and a half from north to south, by half a mile east and west. On the western side it was bounded by the great Batavia river, and on the eastern by the Slokan rivulet, the two being connected at each end by a deep ditch. In rear of these two ditches were regular entrenchments extending likewise from river to river, the defences being completed by strong redoubts on the Slokan and at the two ends of the position, and by batteries upon various points of vantage. Such a stronghold was not to be lightly assaulted ; and though, after the action of the 10th, one Sepoy and two British battalions were pushed forward to within a mile of the lines, and their picquets to within half of that distance, Auchmuty resolved to proceed by the regular method of a siege. He therefore shifted his base from Chilingching to Batavia ; moved up the reserve to rejoin the rest of the army at Weltevreden, and began to land and bring forward his heavy

Aug. 14. artillery. On the 14th ground was broken by the conversion of a ditch on the north face of the lines into a parallel ; and at the same time a road was cut through the pepper-plantations in order that the material for a siege might be brought forward unobserved by the

Aug. 20. enemy. On the 20th the construction of batteries was begun six hundred yards from the hostile entrenchments ; namely, one battery of twelve guns to play upon the redoubt at the north-western angle, a second of eight cannon, and a third of nine mortars and howitzers to batter the works farther to the east.

Aug. 21. On the 21st the enemy for the first time discovered the working parties, and annoyed them greatly by a

destructive fire. However, by the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>. 22<sup>nd</sup> the batteries were completed and the guns Aug. 22. brought up, when just before dawn the enemy made a sortie, directing one column straight upon the British cannon, while another party turned the parallels by the east. For the moment the attack was successful. The turning column seized the second and third batteries, and held them for a short time, until driven out by the Sixty-ninth and some Bengal Sepoys; while the body which advanced against the twelve-gun battery had the good luck to come upon a large number of seamen and gunners, when they were wholly engrossed in the business of mounting the guns. These last instantly ran back to the trenches, causing such confusion that it was difficult to collect any troops for an advance; but a small party of the Fifty-ninth was luckily got together just in time to prevent the battery from being occupied and the pieces from being spiked. The whole affair was somewhat discreditable to the British, for, had proper precautions been taken and proper vigilance been observed, the enemy's turning party ought never to have reached the second and third batteries at all; while the attack upon the twelve-gun battery caused something greatly resembling a panic, which was not allayed until six British officers had been killed and three others wounded.

After the failure of the sortie the enemy poured in a tremendous fire from over forty heavy guns, which caused some loss,<sup>1</sup> but called forth no reply from Auchmuty; and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the cannon on both sides were silent, both parties being engaged in the task of strengthening their works. At length, on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the Aug. 24. British batteries, now increased to five, opened fire in earnest, greatly damaging the enemy's redoubts and dismounting many of his guns. The majority of Auchmuty's gunners were seamen, who doubtless enjoyed the novelty of a fixed target and stable platform;

<sup>1</sup> The losses on the 22<sup>nd</sup> were 67 Europeans and 29 Sepoys killed and wounded.



1811. and it was noticed that, whereas the French fire was  
Aug. 24. the more rapid, that of the British was the better directed. Nevertheless, the casualties of the British were not light, though they were not heeded. Indeed it is recorded that a Royal Artilleryman, who was walking to the rear after losing one arm by a round shot in the trenches, halted and saluted the General with his remaining arm as he passed him. With such men in the besieging force the result of the duel was certain. On  
Aug. 25. the 25th the assailants' batteries renewed their fire, and before dark those of the enemy were silenced. Every gun appeared to be dismounted or disabled; and the merlons which had been constructed during the siege—for the redoubts had been designed *en barbette*—were all knocked away. But apart from this, great fatigue under a tropical sun had told heavily upon the British; the enemy by discovering and enfilading the road cut through the pepper-plantations had hampered the operations and inflicted heavy loss; the hospitals were full; and Auchmuty saw that the time was come for an assault.

The task was a formidable one, for it had not yet been found possible to ascertain the enemy's numbers or his dispositions. The northern face of the entrenchment was evidently too strong for a frontal attack, and the southern presented every appearance of being, as in fact it was, even stronger. The western face was covered by an unfordable river, the only bridge over which, at Campong Malayo by the south-eastern angle of the lines, was covered by powerful works and prepared with combustibles for instant destruction. There remained the eastern face, which was undoubtedly the weakest; and it was believed that one of the redoubts, Number Three, being on the eastern bank of the Slokan, might be surprised. By great good fortune an intelligent deserter came in from that very post on the 24th, and gave the requisite information respecting this redoubt. Another deserter had already betrayed the existence of a narrow path between the Great River and the

entrenchments at the north-western angle; and with these facts before him Auchmuty laid his plans to storm an entrenched camp held, so far as he could ascertain, by at least ten thousand native and European soldiers. 1811.

To Colonel Gillespie, as was the case with most of the hard work in this campaign, was committed the principal attack. His force was composed of his own division, strengthened by the flank companies of Wetherall's division; and its function was to proceed by a road which led to the eastern face of the lines, seize the outlying redoubt, Number Three, together with the bridge over the Slokan which connected it with the main position, and so to plunge into the heart of the enemy's defences. Colonel Gibbs, with the Fifty-ninth and the Fourth Bengal battalion, was directed to support him; and these two parties, under Gillespie and Gibbs, formed the first column of attack.<sup>1</sup>

The second column, under Colonel M'Leod, consisted of six companies of the Sixty-ninth and the Sixth Bengal battalion. It was ordered to follow the course of the Great River, and to endeavour to force the entrenchments on their western face, and near the north-western angle by Redoubt Number One.

The third column, made up of the Seventy-eighth and the Fifth Bengal battalion, under Colonel Wood, was to advance along the western bank of the Slokan and

<sup>1</sup> The column advanced in the following order:—

*Gillespie's command.* Rifle co. H.M. 14th; Madras Pioneers; Grenadier co. H.M. 78th.

*Right flank battalion*, viz.: Light cos. H.M. 14th and 59th; Grenadier co. 5th Bengal battalion; Rifle co. 59th.

*Left flank battalion*, viz.: Light cos. H.M. 69th and 78th; Grenadier co. 6th Bengal; Rifle co. 78th; 5 cos. H.M. 89th; detachment Royal Marines; detachments 22nd Dragoons (dismounted); bodyguard (dismounted); detachment Bengal L.I.; detachment 4th Bengal.

*Gibbs's command.* Grenadier cos. 14th, 59th, 69th; H.M. 59th; detachment Bengal L.I.; detachment 4th Bengal.

The reader will take note of the extraordinary jumble of corps in the two columns.

1811. attempt to penetrate the lines about the north-eastern angle.

The fourth column, under Major Yule, was grouped round the flank battalion of the Reserve,<sup>1</sup> which had been placed under his orders to sever communications between the enemy's army and the country to westward by the bridge of Campong Malayo. To this corps was now added two companies of the Sixty-ninth, a squadron of the Twenty-second Light Dragoons, and four horse-artillery guns, with orders to attack and, if possible, to carry the bridge aforesaid.

The remainder of the force, namely, the Fourteenth, two Bengal battalions, two squadrons of Dragoons, and four horse-artillery guns were formed in the trenches as a reserve under Wetherall; and Auchmuty himself took up his station in the same spot.

Aug. 26. Gillespie's and Yule's columns, having the longest distance to traverse, moved off at about midnight, the former under the guidance of a deserter. The route was extremely intricate, passing through difficult country so much broken by ravines, enclosures, and plantations that frequently the troops could advance only in single file. The night also was excessively dark; and once, at a point where several paths met, the guide was so much perplexed that he was only set right by the help of Auchmuty's aide-de-camp, Major Dickson, who had fortunately made reconnaissances in the same direction. At length the head of Gillespie's column drew near the enemy's works, when word was brought to the Colonel that the rear of the column under Gibbs had gone astray. He at once halted; but, dreading the approach of dawn, decided after a short pause to open the attack with his own troops only, trusting to the sound of the firing to guide Gibbs to the right quarter. A deep cut across the road close to the enemy's lines caused some delay; but the obstacle was surmounted, and the men were formed up before the first gleam of light revealed a sentry between

<sup>1</sup> This would, I suppose, mean a battalion composed of the flank companies of the three Bengal battalions of Wood's division.

Redoubts Three and Four. This man challenged the British twice, but receiving the answer "Patrol" allowed them to pass on. Just outside Number Three Redoubt a second challenge came from an officer's picquet, and this Gillespie answered by the word "Charge." The British sprang forward, and, before the picquet could fire more than a few straggling shots, had swept it away and passed towards the entrenchments in unbroken good order. Blue lights and rockets now flared up in every direction, and the two redoubts opened a terrific but ill-aimed fire of round shot and grape; but, without giving the gunners of Number Three Redoubt time to reload their pieces, the British swarmed into it, and plied their bayonets among the panic-stricken garrison with frightful havoc. Within a few minutes the redoubt was won; and a second body of the enemy, which had been drawn up by its southern face, was dispersed. Still keeping his men together, Gillespie pressed forward without delay to the most important point of all, the bridge over the Slokan. The passage was defended in front by four field-guns, and flanked by the batteries of Redoubts Two and Four; but, despite of a tremendous fire of grape and musketry, it was carried after a sharp struggle, and Gillespie now led his column southward upon Redoubt Number Four. The enemy being by this time fully on their guard, the resistance to his onset was more formidable; but none the less it was overcome, and this stronghold likewise was stormed and taken, though not without heavy loss.

The capture of Number Two Redoubt was still necessary to complete the work of the main attack; and Gillespie accordingly advanced against it. Finding, however, that he had outstripped the bulk of his column, he resolved to await the arrival of fresh troops for the assault. In a few minutes the three leading companies of Gibbs's column came up, and falling upon the rear face of the redoubt soon dashed the enemy out of it; Gillespie in person taking the commandant, Brigadier-general Jauffret, his prisoner. The assailants were in the act of

1811. congratulating each other on their success when the magazine of the redoubt was blown up by two French officers, and the greater part of the attacking force, together with many of the enemy, were killed or disabled by the explosion. Indeed, for some minutes every man was paralysed by the shock, and, if the enemy had then attempted to recapture the redoubt, the survivors would have been powerless to prevent them. Happily no such effort was made ; and before long the arrival of the Fifty-ninth, under Lieutenant-colonel Alexander M'Leod, set the misgivings of Gillespie at rest.

Meanwhile the remaining columns had been hardly less successful at other points than that of Gillespie. Colonel Wood had indeed failed to force the passage of the ditch on the northern face of the lines, but a few of his men succeeded in scrambling over the obstacle and in clearing the entrenchments in front of Number Two Redoubt. Colonel William M'Leod of the Sixty-ninth was more fortunate at the north-western angle ; for he not only took his column over the ditch but stormed Number One Redoubt out of hand. Thus the lines had been forced in three different places, and the distraction of the defenders had throughout been increased by a feint attack which Auchmuty had directed, with the reserve, against the whole of the northern face. Now, therefore, Gillespie led the Fifty-ninth against the enemy's reserve and park of artillery, which was drawn up in a strong position between the barracks and Fort Cornelis. The onset was ill-managed, the troops being thrown into action piecemeal ; and the Fifty-ninth suffered severely until the various columns gradually closed up from all quarters upon Fort Cornelis. Then the enemy hastily abandoned all the remaining defences, and retreated southward upon Buitenzorg, much harassed by the guns of Yule's party which, though it had failed to pass the river at Campong Malayo owing to the burning of the bridge, was able to keep up a heavy fire upon the retiring columns.

But the amazing energy of Gillespie was not yet exhausted. He had started for the day's work with fever upon him; he had covered every inch of ground both in the march and in the attack upon his own feet, the ground forbidding him to use a horse; and having received a severe contusion during the engagement with the enemy's reserve, he had fainted at its close in the arms of two of his staff. But presently the British dragoons came up; and the indomitable man, having caused a passage to be made across the ditch, cut a horse loose from a captured limber, mounted it, and placed himself at their head for the pursuit. Within a mile he overtook the tail of the enemy's column, charged and dispersed it, and hastened on in chase of the remainder. The fugitives took refuge in the jungle, but were hunted back into the road by the British infantry, where the dragoons flew at them once more. The French and Dutch officers strove nobly to rally their men and to check the rout; and at Campong Macassar, about five miles south of the lines, they made some semblance of a stand, unlimbering four horse-artillery guns, which they had saved from the wreck, behind the shelter of thick hedges and overturned waggons. It was useless. The dragoons, heedless of the fire, charged straight down upon the guns, and the enemy's troops, flinging away their arms, fled in all directions. For nearly three miles more Gillespie pressed the pursuit; and, when at last he halted at Tanjong, he could say with truth that the army of Janssens had ceased to exist.

The prisoners taken in this action numbered six thousand, including two generals, the whole of the headquarters staff, thirty field-officers, and over two hundred other officers. One fine body of Voltigeurs, recently arrived from France, was captured entire, and but a single small body of horse succeeded in escaping; while General Janssens and Jumelle only evaded the British dragoons by mingling with the flying infantry in the jungle. Among the European officers of the

1811. enemy the killed numbered forty and the wounded sixty-three, from which it is reasonable to conclude that the killed and wounded of the rank and file exceeded two thousand.<sup>1</sup> The casualties of the British amounted to six hundred and thirty-three, of which number five hundred and fifty were Europeans; eleven European officers and fifty-three men being killed, forty-four officers and four hundred and forty-two men wounded and missing.<sup>2</sup>

The Fifty-ninth suffered most heavily of all in point of numbers, having lost five officers and twelve men killed, ten officers and one hundred and ten men wounded out of a total of about four hundred of all ranks. The losses of the Fourteenth were perhaps relatively higher, amounting to five officers and one hundred and one men killed and wounded out of three companies. The most distinguished of the officers who fell was Lieutenant-colonel William McLeod of the Sixty-ninth who, as a Major, had commanded the Seventy-sixth throughout Lord Lake's campaign. Yet, the sacrifice of life was not great, considering the magnitude of the advantage gained. In truth, the storm of the lines of Cornelis, though utterly forgotten both by the army and the nation, is none the less one of the great exploits of the Napoleonic war. The odds were against the British in point of numbers, while the strength of the enemy's position was enough to daunt the boldest general. Not only were the fortifications themselves most formidable, but the approaches to them had been sown with every kind of obstruction from *trous de loup* to abatis. The guns actually mounted in the batteries numbered two hundred and eighty, and, even after these had been captured, the enemy retained fifty-eight pieces for combat in the open field. Moreover, though Janssens's contingent of European soldiers

<sup>1</sup> Judging from Auchmuty's despatch the killed alone must have exceeded one thousand.

<sup>2</sup> The lists of officers killed and wounded as given by Thorn and by the Gazette do not tally. I have taken the numbers given in the Gazette.

appears not to have exceeded sixteen hundred, yet these 1811. had been carefully distributed, so many to a company, among the native troops, which counted over ten thousand effective men, all trained, disciplined, and led by European officers.<sup>1</sup> The strength of the main British attacking column, European and natives, can hardly have been greater than three thousand men, looking to previous losses from wounds and sickness; and the entire force at Auchmuty's disposal for the assault can have been but little more than five thousand. Moreover, the operations were conducted in a hot and unhealthy climate, only six degrees south of the equator. Yet by consummate skill and daring not only were the lines of Cornelis stormed, but the defending army was utterly routed and dispersed; while the pursuit with a handful of horse—perhaps two hundred troopers—aided by a battery of horse-artillery, was one of the most remarkable to be found in the history of the British cavalry. Gillespie was of course the hero of the day, combining the leadership both of the attack and of the pursuit with extraordinary personal prowess; for he individually captured two generals and one colonel, and killed another colonel in single combat. Yet he had entered the action quaking with fever, and at its close was overcome by a virulent attack which brought him to the brink of the grave. It may well be doubted whether, in the whole story of the Army, any man has ever distinguished himself so signally in any one engagement as did Rollo Gillespie at the lines of Cornelis.

Janssens, meanwhile, fled to Buitenzorg, whence, finding himself without an army, he turned eastward on the 27th. On the following day Gibbs took Aug. 27. possession of that place, which, though fortified and mounting forty-three guns, offered no resistance. On the 31st Auchmuty, upon hearing of Janssens's dis- Aug. 31. appearance, sent a battalion of Sepoys by sea under

<sup>1</sup> These numbers are taken from the returns captured by Auchmuty and printed in the Gazette.



1811. convoy of a squadron of frigates to Cheribon, which fortress capitulated at the first summons. It was ascertained that Janssens had passed through the place two days earlier ; but General Jumelle, whom he had left at Buitenzorg, rode into the town unwittingly after its surrender to the British, and was of course taken. A small body of some seven hundred native and European troops, who were on their way eastward to join Janssens, were also cut off from him by the capture of this post on the road, and became prisoners of war. A short march westward from Cheribon gave a party of marines and seamen possession of Carang Sambong, whereby other parties of stragglers were secured, and

Sept. 6. the entire country west of Cheribon was subdued.

Meanwhile, on the 5th of September Auchmuty sailed from Batavia with a small force<sup>1</sup> for Zedayo, expecting that Janssens would have made for Sourabaya, the possession of which harbour Admiral Stopford considered essential to the safety of the fleet during the monsoon. Ascertaining, however, from intercepted letters, that Janssens had gone to Samarang, Sir Samuel, after a vain attempt to induce the Dutch general to come to terms, proceeded to that place,

Sept. 12. which he occupied on the 12th without resistance. Here he learned that Janssens, having been joined by a regular battalion from Sourabaya and by raw levies of the native princes, had taken up a strong position about six miles inland at Jattoo ; where Auchmuty determined to attack him before going any further. The change of plans had, however, brought about confusion in the orders for the movements of the troops ; and, after waiting four days in vain for re-

Sept. 16. inforcements, Auchmuty on the 16th advanced towards Jattoo with such men as he had on the spot, about sixteen hundred of all ranks.<sup>2</sup> After six miles of

<sup>1</sup> 1 troop Twenty-second L.D., H.M. Fourteenth and Seventy-eighth, 4th batt. Bengal sepoy, Madras pioneers, detachment of Royal and Bengal artillery.

<sup>2</sup> Fourteenth Foot 630, Seventy-eighth 420, Bengal Sepoys 60, Pioneers 200, Lascars 180, Artillery 110 with 6 guns.

march over a difficult and hilly country, the enemy<sup>1811.</sup> was discovered on some lofty and rugged heights astride of the main road which led from Samarang southward, the road itself being blocked by *chevaux de frise*, and the front of the position covered by some thirty guns regularly disposed upon platforms. The strength of Janssens's force was about eight thousand, of whom less than one-tenth were regular troops and equipped with firearms; but, as the only access to the heights lay over an open valley, twelve hundred yards broad and fully exposed to the enemy's artillery, the officers of Auchmuty's staff were opposed to the idea of a frontal attack. The General, however, had determined otherwise; first, because he could see that the enemy's flanks were not to be turned; and, secondly, because he had no idea of being daunted by so contemptible a foe. Accordingly, he opened fire at long range and great elevation with his guns; while Colonel Gibbs with a few light infantry made a rush across the valley, and established himself under shelter near the summit of the heights, before the astonished defenders could discharge a shot. The main body then crossed the valley under a heavy but harmless fire which cost it but two men killed and a few more wounded, whereupon the raw levies abandoned their artillery and ran away. One large body of native cavalry with huge cocked hats and long spears was checked by one of Auchmuty's aides-de-camp single-handed, and was hunted for some miles by him and another of the General's staff without attempting resistance.<sup>1</sup>

With the rout of this rabble Janssens's last hope vanished, and on the same evening he sent a flag to Auchmuty to suggest a capitulation. He was anxious to treat with Lord Minto, who was at Batavia, but Auchmuty would not hear of such a thing. Though the force at Batavia had been destroyed, there were

<sup>1</sup> Auchmuty ordered a party of light infantry to open fire upon this cavalry, but the sergeant in charge said that he could not, "for there was the aide-de-camp a-licking of them."

1811. still troops enough, both European and native, at Sourabaya to make a formidable opposition ; and Sir Samuel had not nearly sufficient men with him to follow Janssens into the interior. The British General, therefore, took a high tone and insisted upon practically unconditional surrender of Java and all its dependencies within twenty-four hours. Janssens raised feeble protests, which Auchmuty answered by advancing for some miles into the interior. A few hours later the capitulation was signed, and the last of the Dutch East Indian possessions passed into English hands.

1812. These acquisitions were no sinecure, and twice during 1812 Gillespie was obliged to lead punitive expeditions against native chiefs, to Palembang in Sumatra, and immediately afterwards to Dyodyocarta in Java. In the first instance he boldly walked into a fort with seventeen grenadiers only, overcoming all resistance by sheer ascendancy of courage. In the second, the storming of a huge fortified enclosure, with a perimeter of three miles and defended by seventeen thousand men, cost him over one hundred killed and wounded out of twelve hundred soldiers. In both instances the brunt of the work fell upon detachments of the regiments which had subdued Janssens, most notably upon the Fourteenth, Fifty-ninth, and Seventy-eighth, three noble battalions which no hardship of a tropical campaign could discourage, no sickness of a pestilent climate could dismay, and no wiles nor numbers of a teeming and treacherous enemy could daunt for one moment.

A word remains to be said of Auchmuty, of whom we shall see no more. The son of a loyal American colonist, he had received his commission at New York in 1777 at the age of twenty-one, but, through poverty, had been obliged to exchange to a regiment quartered in India. There he had served against Hyder Ali in 1788, and against Tippoo Sahib from 1790 to 1792 ; and thence he had sailed with Baird's force to Egypt, from which he returned to England a colonel and

knight. We can now form some judgment of what he <sup>1812.</sup> might have accomplished had he been left in command of the British at Rio de la Plata. For this campaign in Java was no easy one. The preliminary voyage to the scene of action was long and through tropical seas, so that the soldiers must inevitably disembark weak and exhausted; the country was unreconnoitred and unknown, and the enemy's force unascertained but believed to be superior. Auchmuty was probably fortunate in encountering Janssens rather than Daendels; but Janssens, as we have seen, had faithfully pursued Daendels's military policy in evacuating Batavia, though Auchmuty had cleverly turned this against him by his enterprising seizure of a healthy base at Weltevreden, having communication by water with Batavia. Then came the formidable task of dealing with the entrenched camp at Cornelis. There is no need to dwell again on the skill and daring of the attack of the 26th of August, but it must be noted that Auchmuty laid his plans for the assault in such sort as not only to drive the enemy from their stronghold, but to annihilate the hostile army and practically to close the war. Many generals would have been content with a victory against such odds; Auchmuty boldly attempted and actually achieved a conquest. Such commanders are not common in any country; and it may be safely asserted that, if Napoleon had conducted the campaign of Java exactly as did Auchmuty, whole libraries would have been written in laudation of it. Yet this brilliant and sterling soldier has been forgotten, and his greatest exploit survives as a mere name upon certain colours. Possibly after the lapse of a hundred years our military instructors may bethink them to examine it, and decide whether it be not worthy of inclusion as a classic among the lesser campaigns of the British Army.

*Note.*—The authorities for the Java expedition are Thorn's *Conquest of Java*; *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, vol. ii.; Minto's *Life of Lord Minto*; Wilson's *History of the Madras Army*.



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